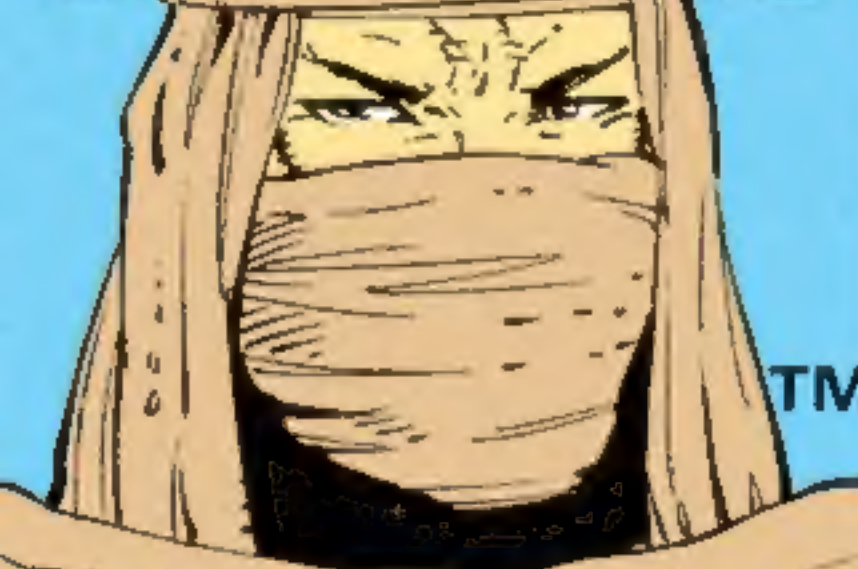




MARVEL[®]
COMICS



© 1994 MARVEL ENT. GROUP, INC.

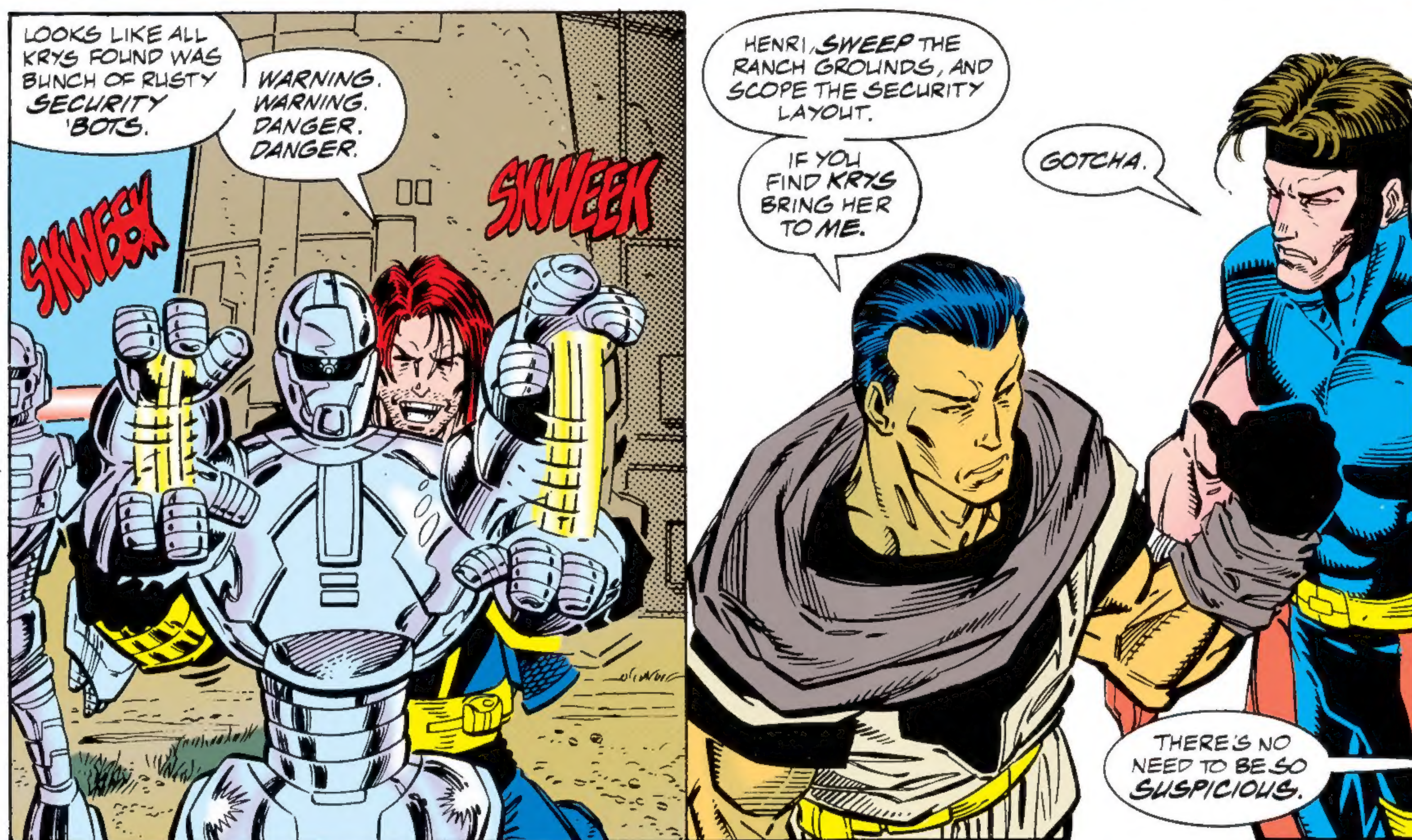
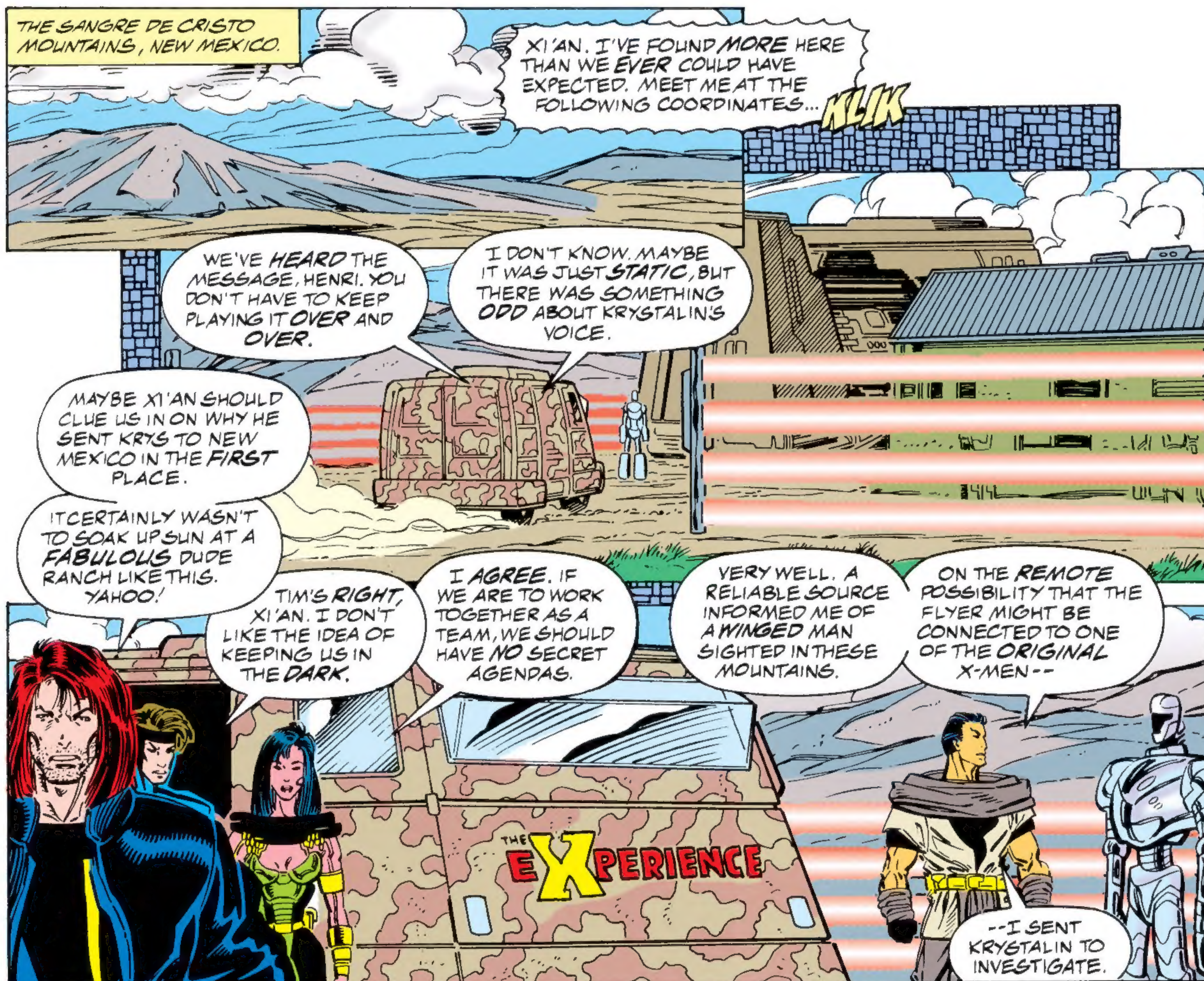
\$1.50 US
\$2.05 CAN
9
JUN
CC 01545

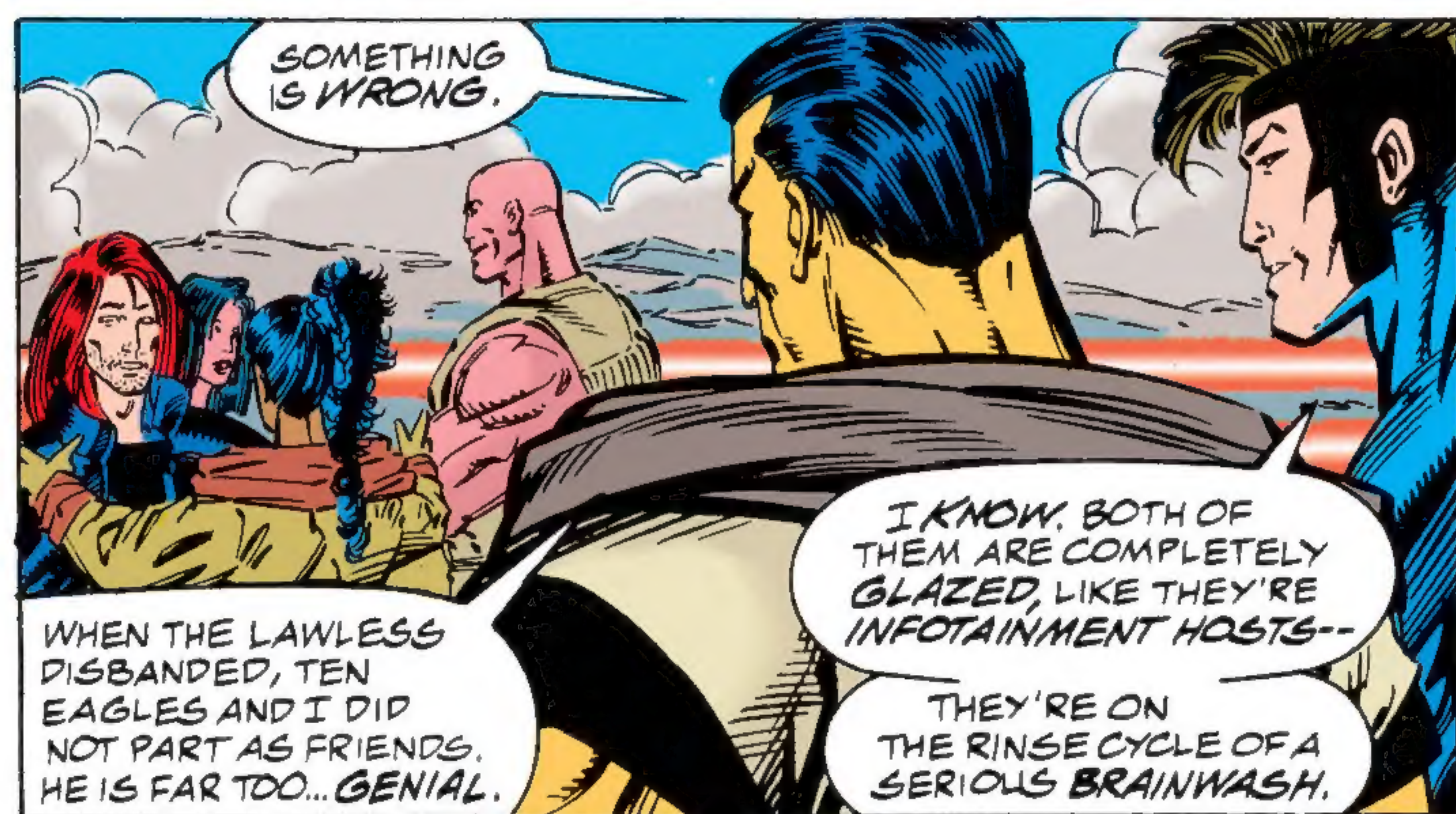
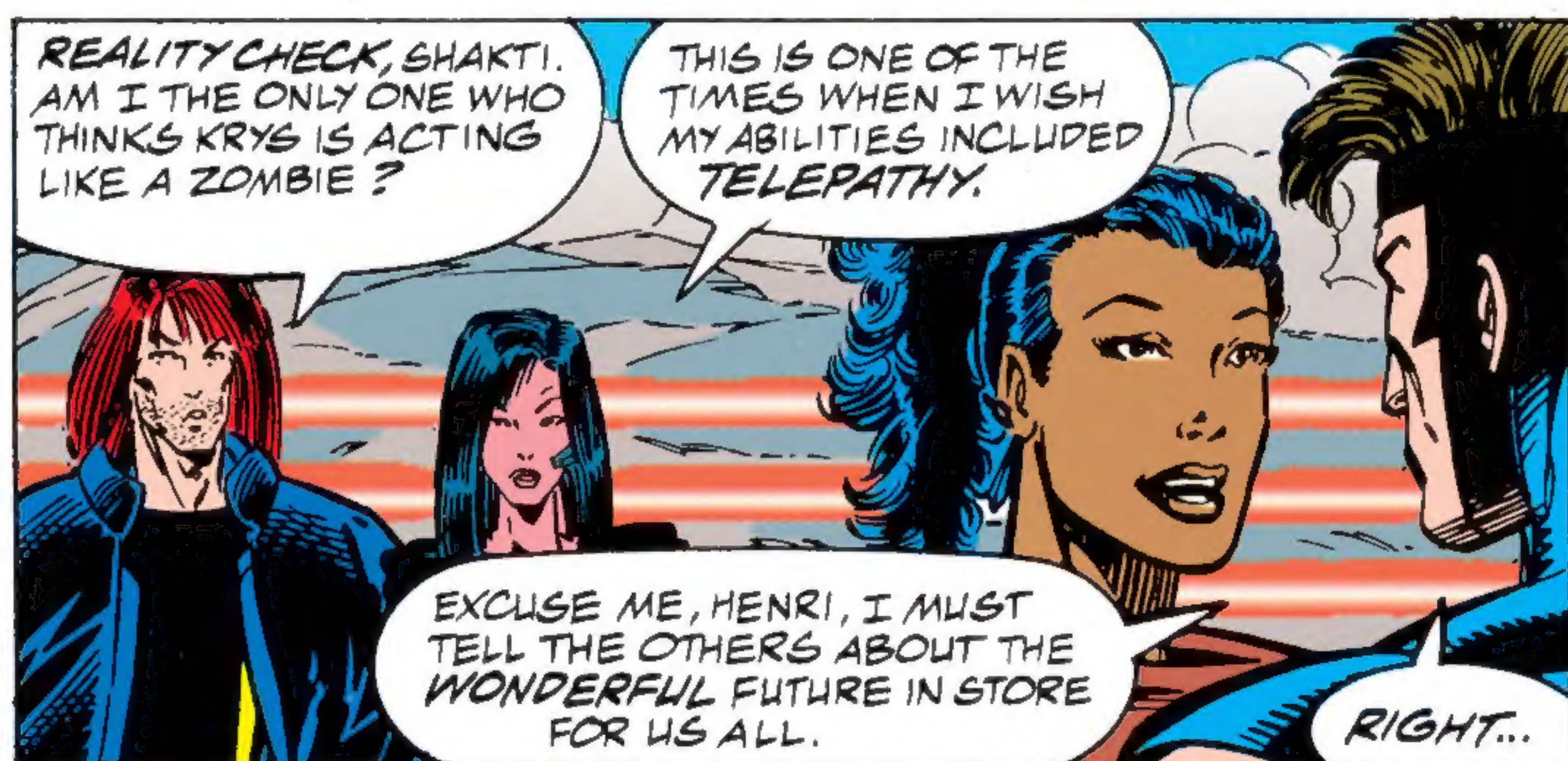
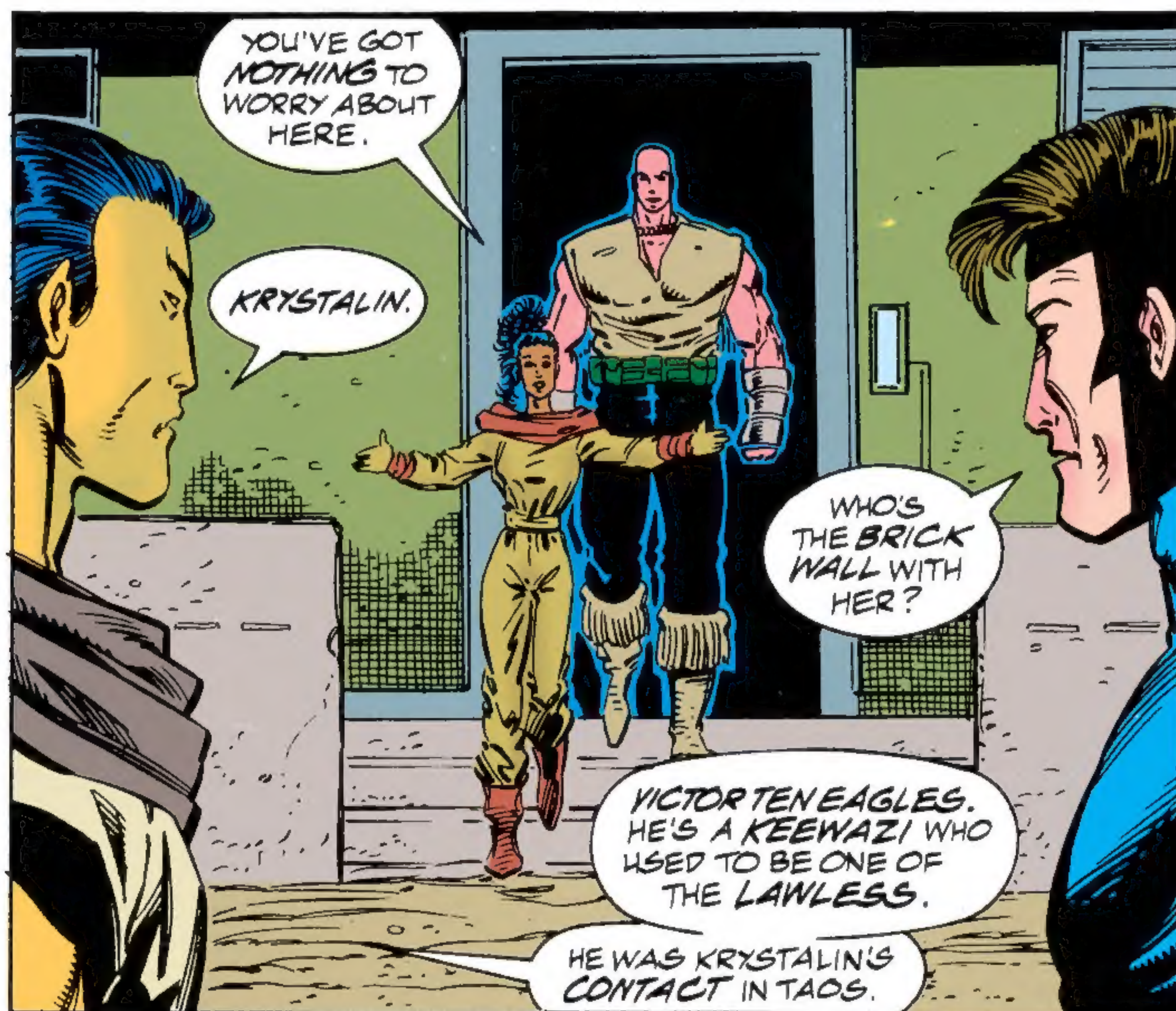
APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

THE
SECRET
OF

X-MEN

BON 94
BIM
f





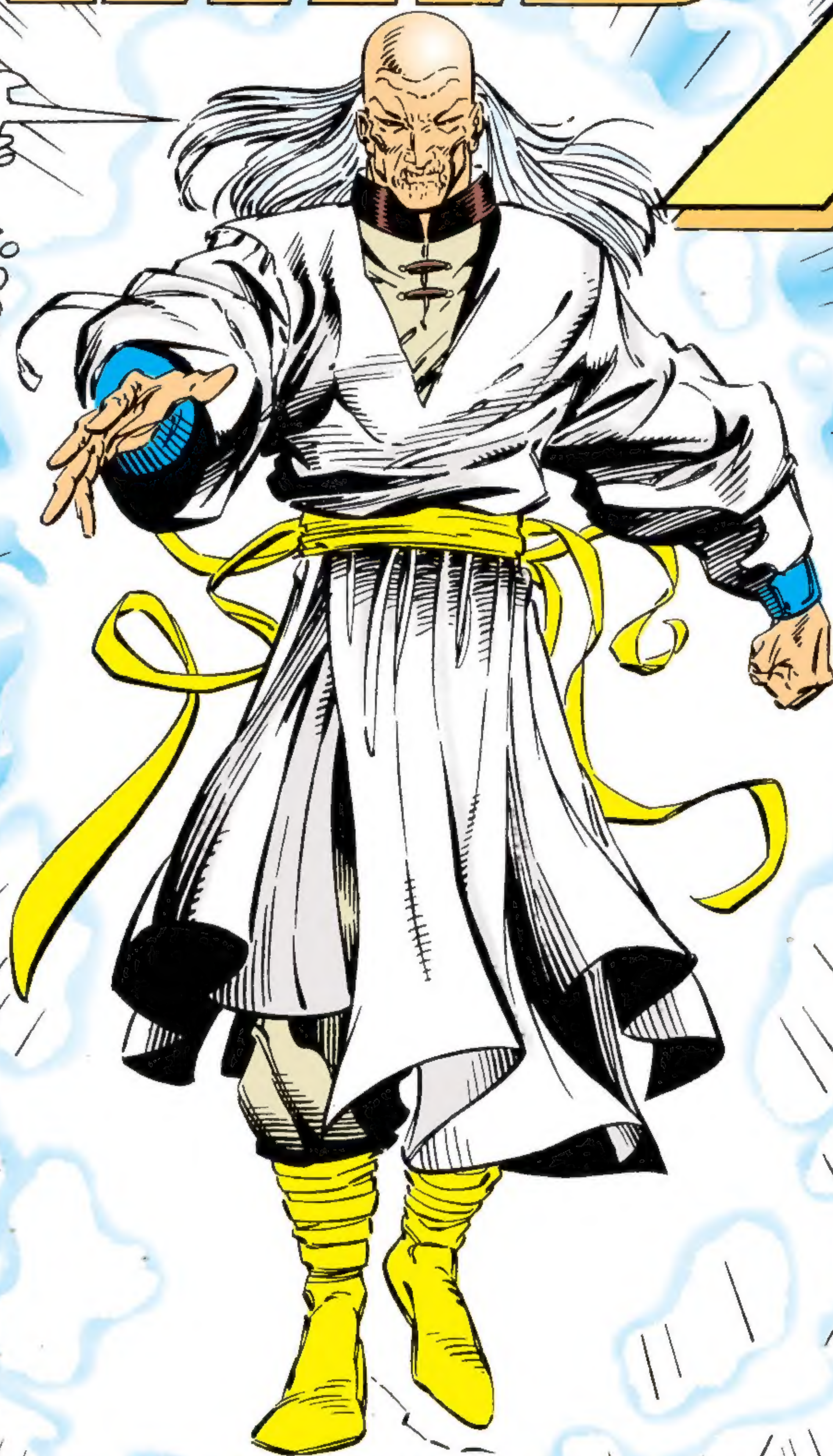
BRAND X

MASTER ZHAO
BIDS YOU WELCOME,
MUTANTS!

I HAVE BROUGHT
YOU HERE TO JOIN
ME IN THE GENETIC
CRUSADE TO COME.

YOU WILL
BE MY HOLY
WARRIORS--

--MY
X-MEN!



JOHN FRANCIS MOORE
WRITER

LOPEZ & DUTRO
LETTERER

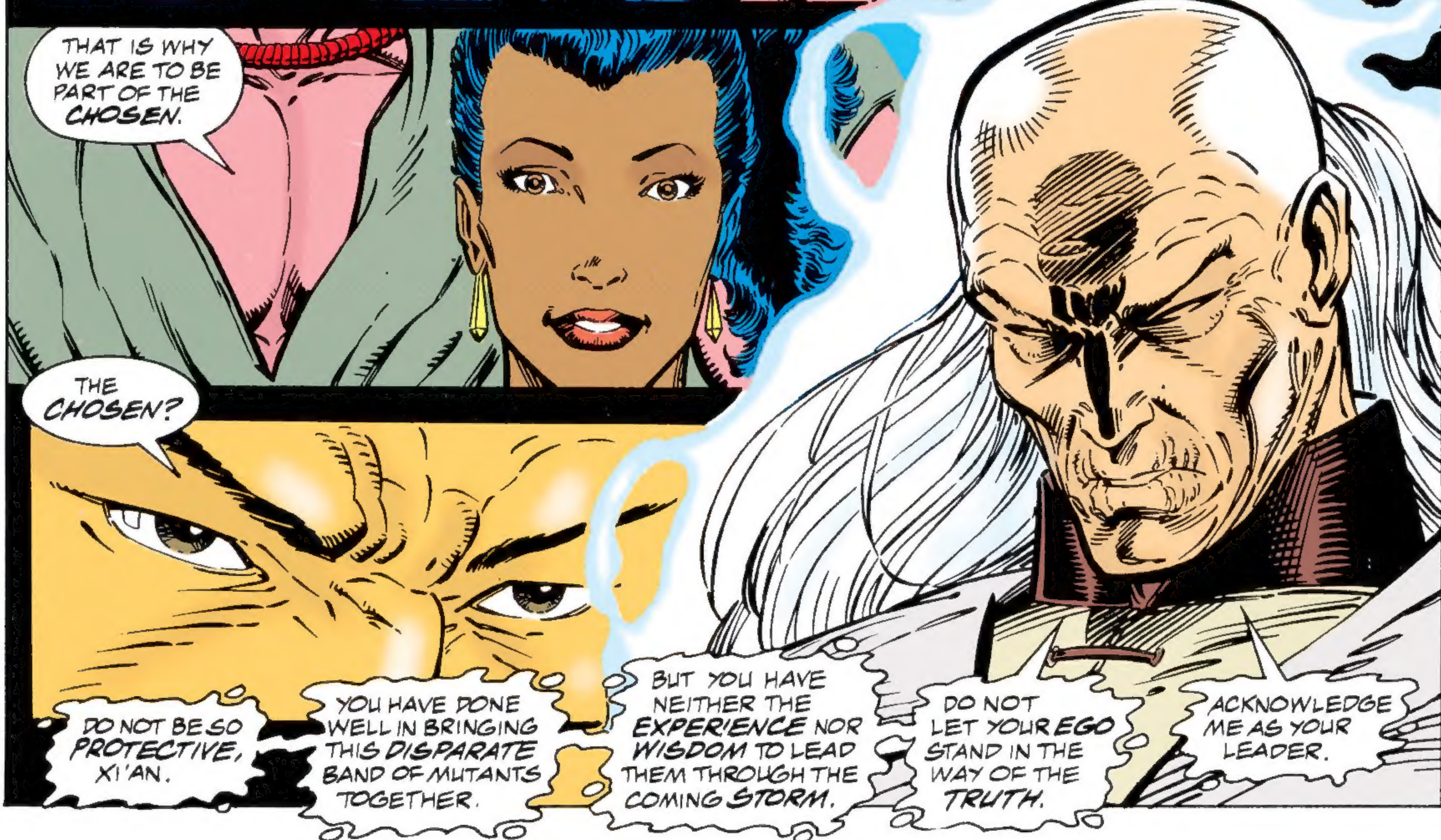
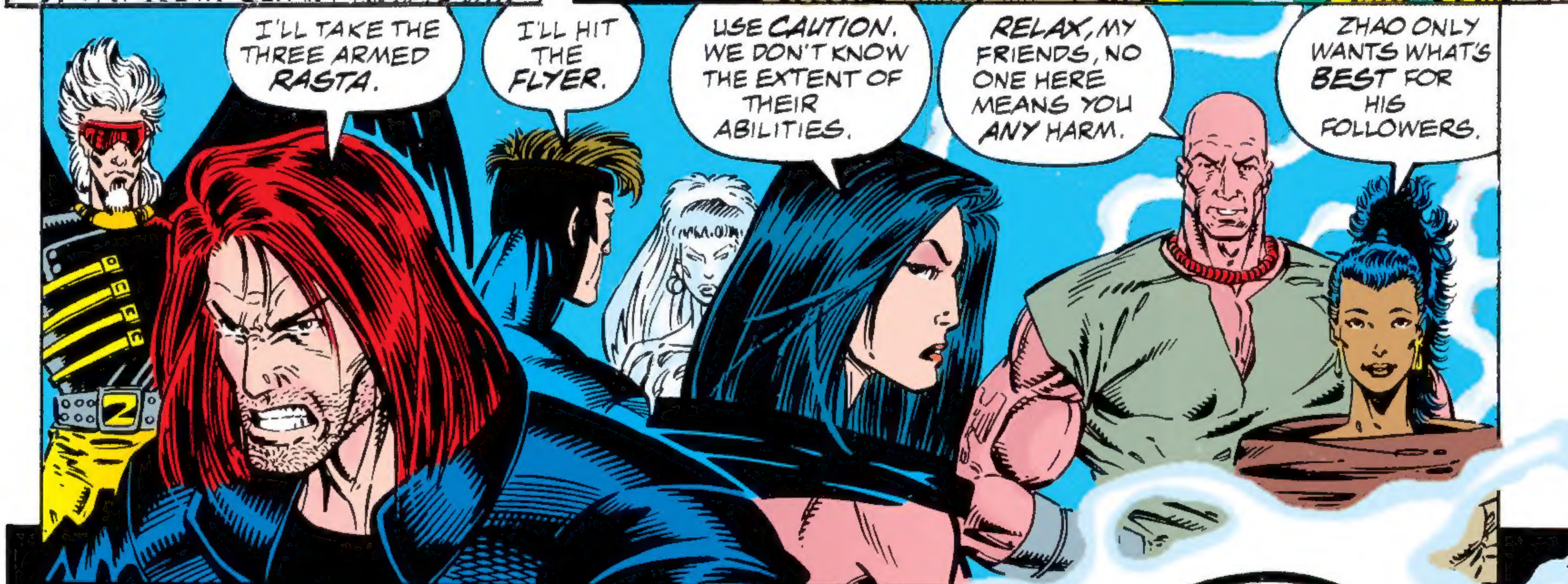
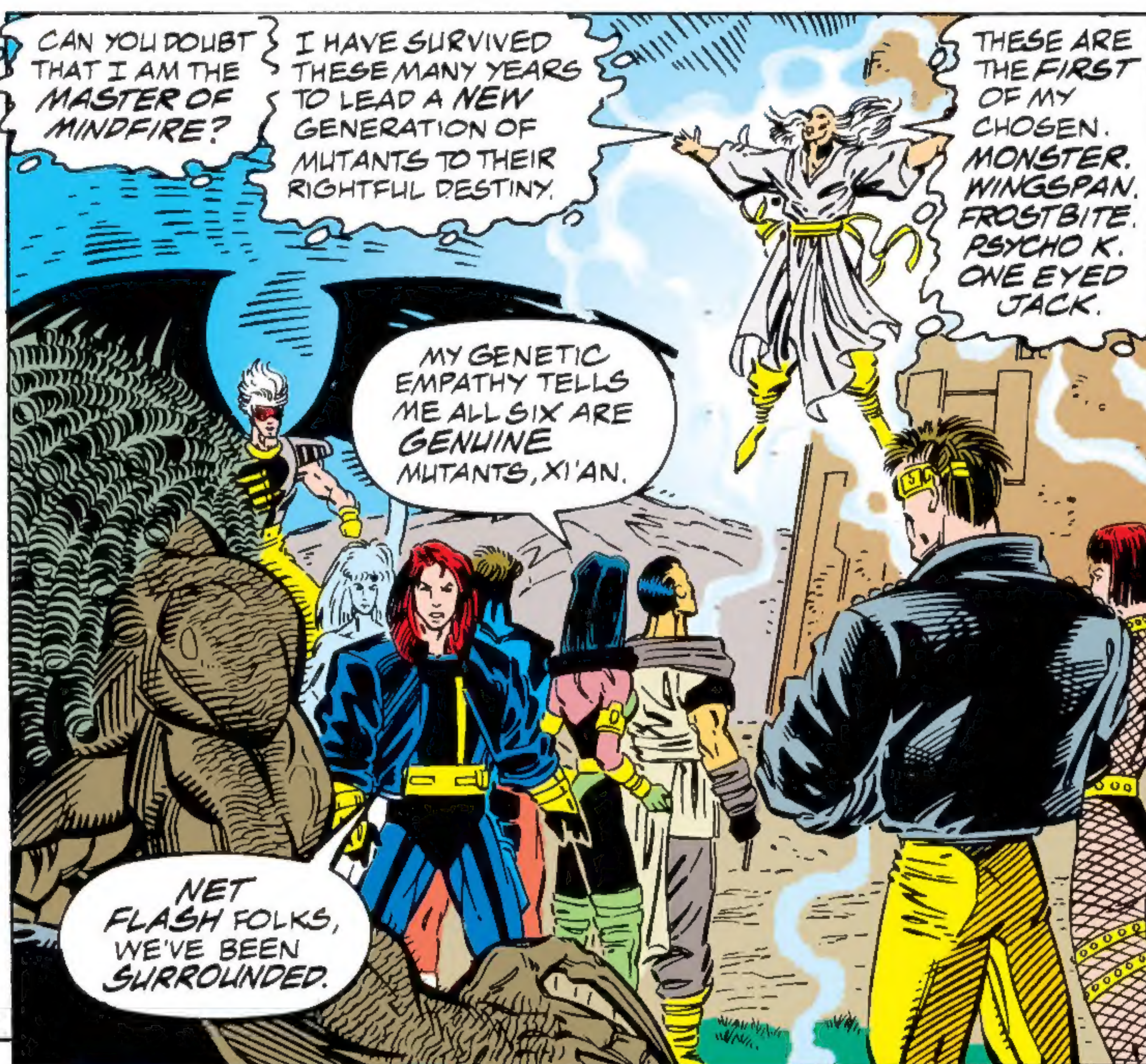
TOM SMITH
COLORIST

RON LIM
PENCILER

JOEY CAVALIERI
EDITOR

JAMES SANDERS III
INKER

TOM DEFALCO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

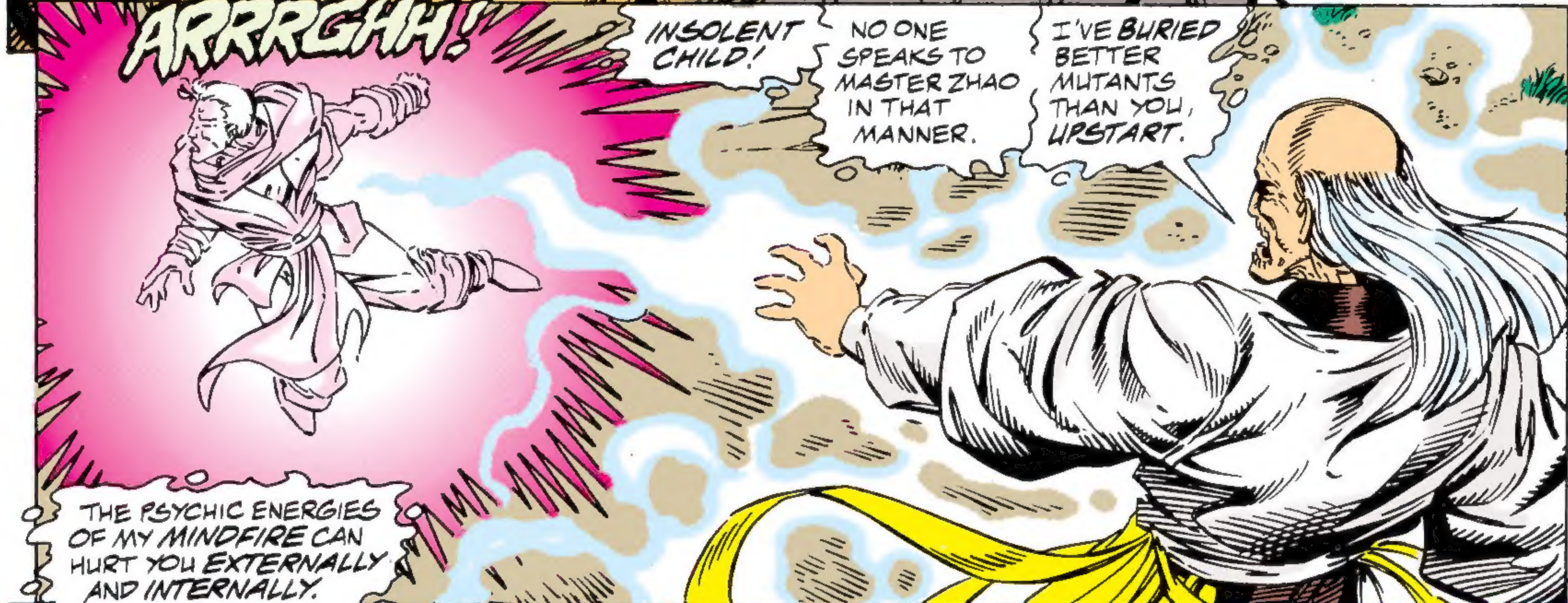




DO YOU THINK I WOULD BLINDLY SURRENDER MY FRIENDS TO YOU, ZHAO--

--AFTER WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO KRYSTALIN AND TEN EAGLES.

RELEASE THEM FROM WHATEVER MIND CONTROL THEY'RE UNDER OR--



ARRRGHH!

INSOLENT CHILD!

NO ONE SPEAKS TO MASTER ZHAO IN THAT MANNER.

I'VE BURIED BETTER MUTANTS THAN YOU, UPSTART.

THE PSYCHIC ENERGIES OF MY MINDFIRE CAN HURT YOU EXTERNALLY AND INTERNALLY.

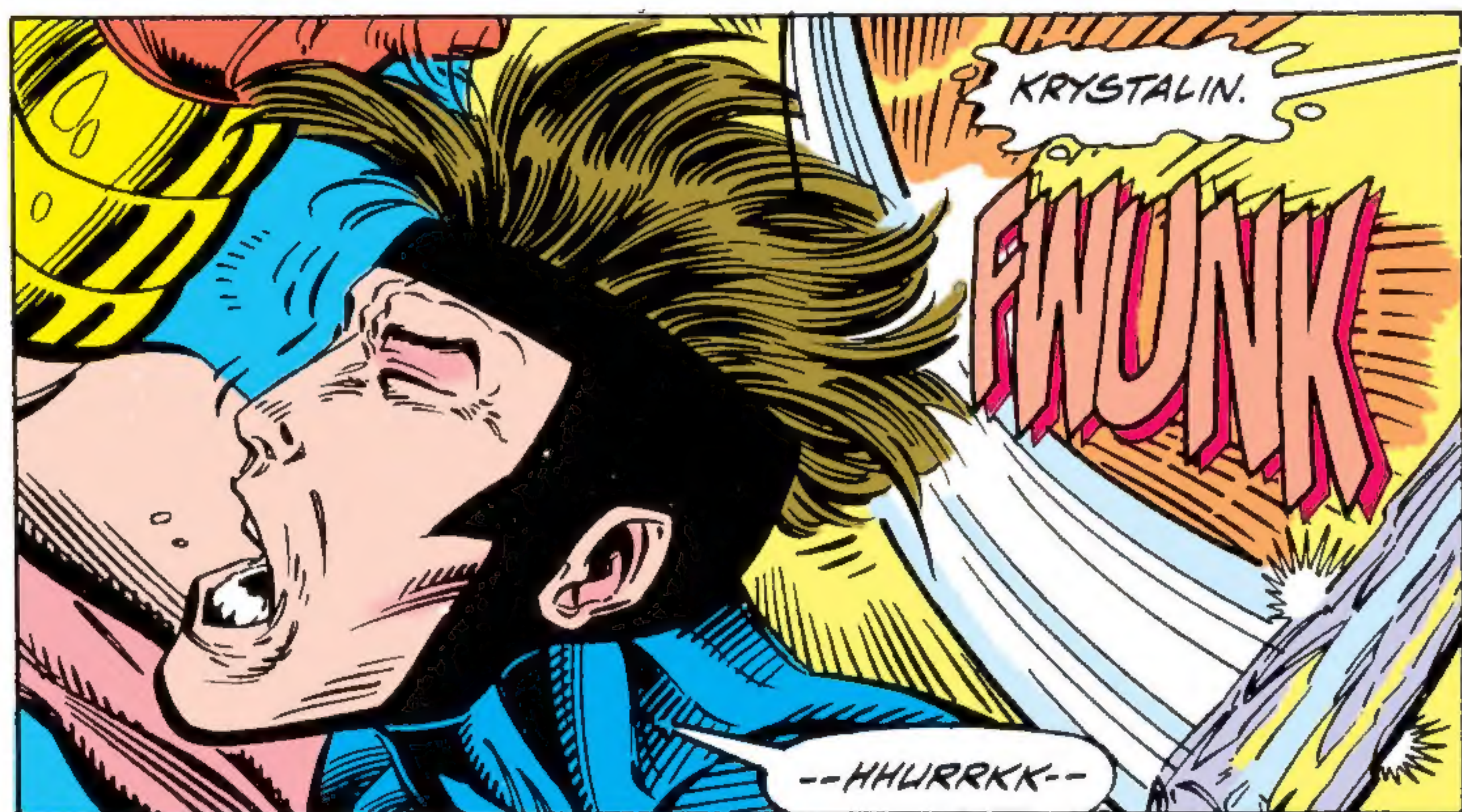


I COULD REND YOUR MIND AND BODY TO PIECES IF I SO DESIRED.



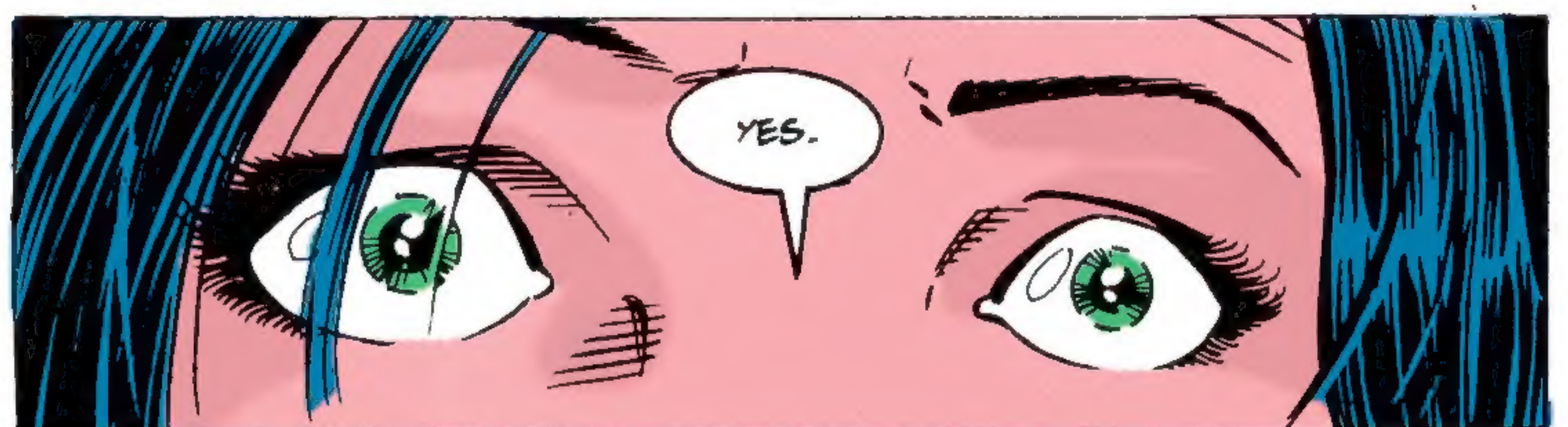
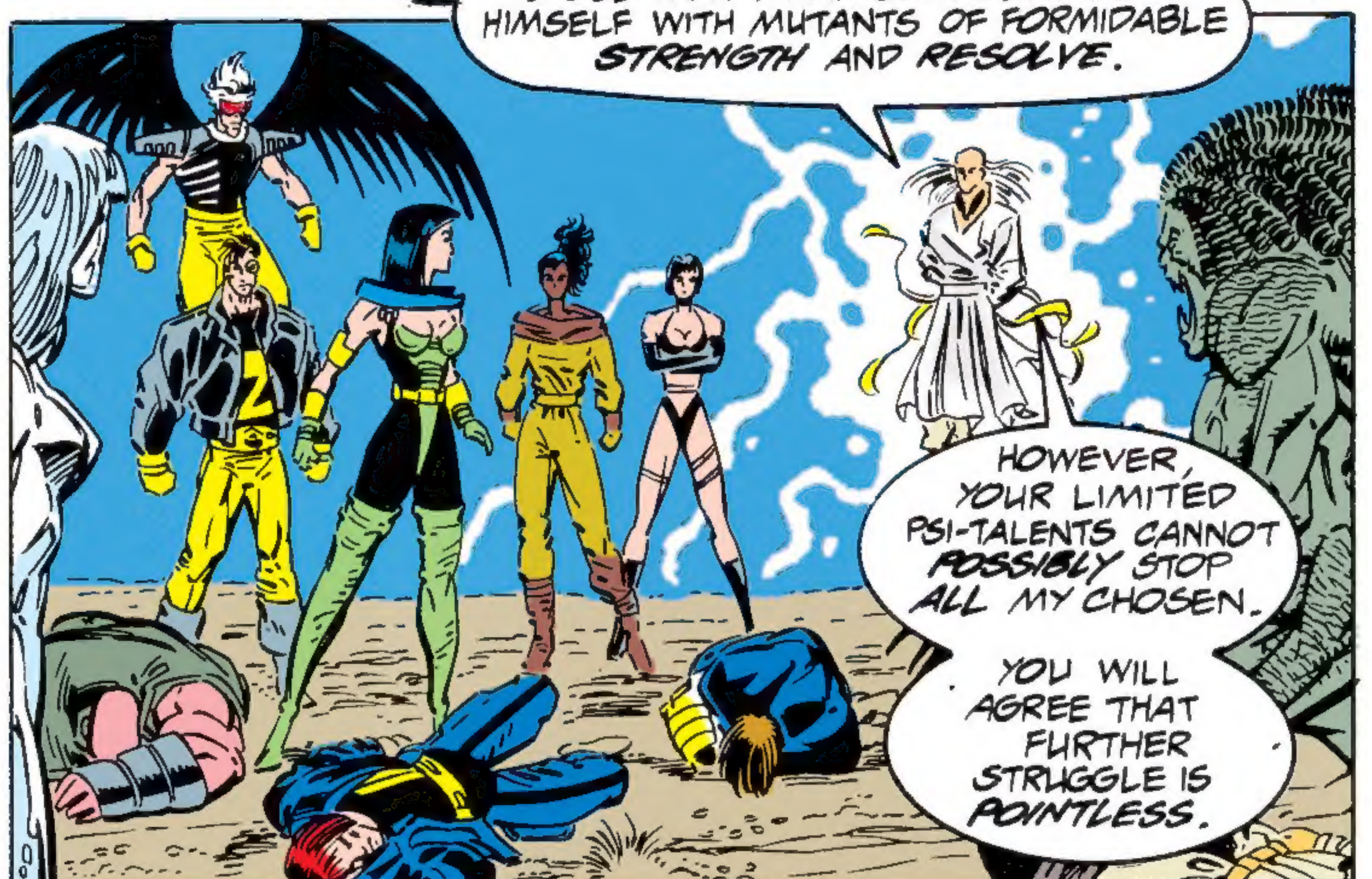
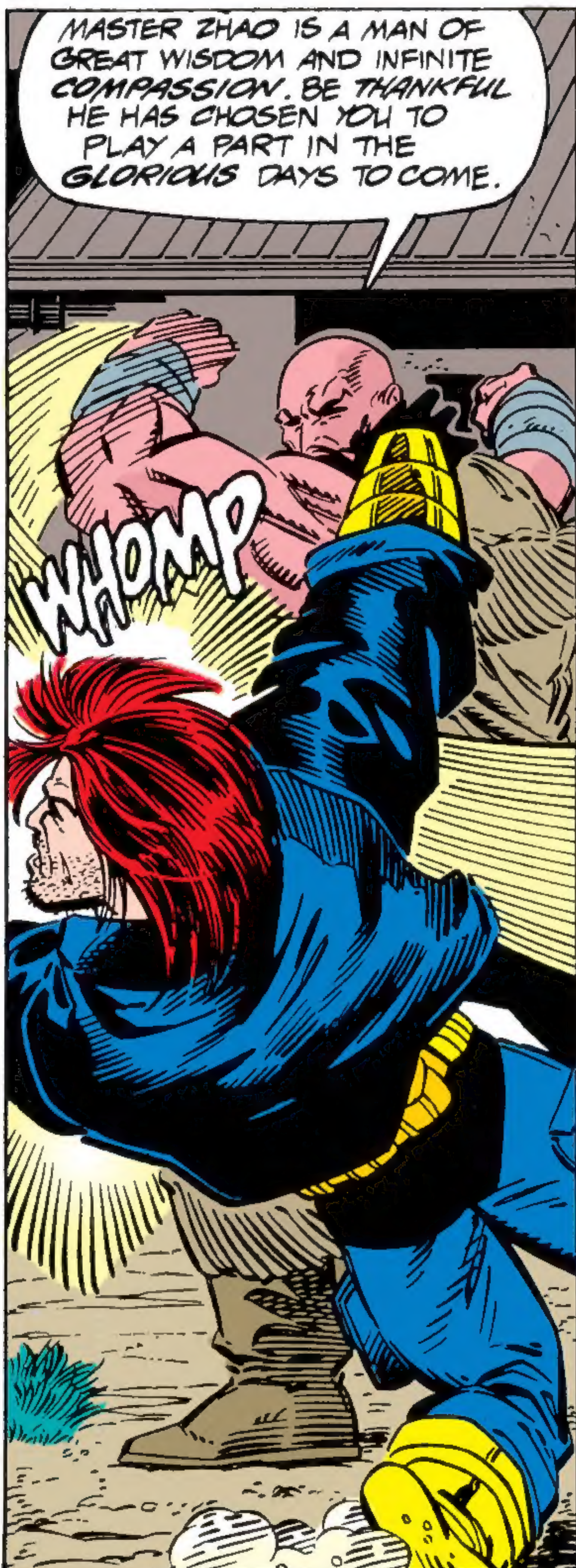
I HOPE I HAVE MADE MY POINT CLEAR.

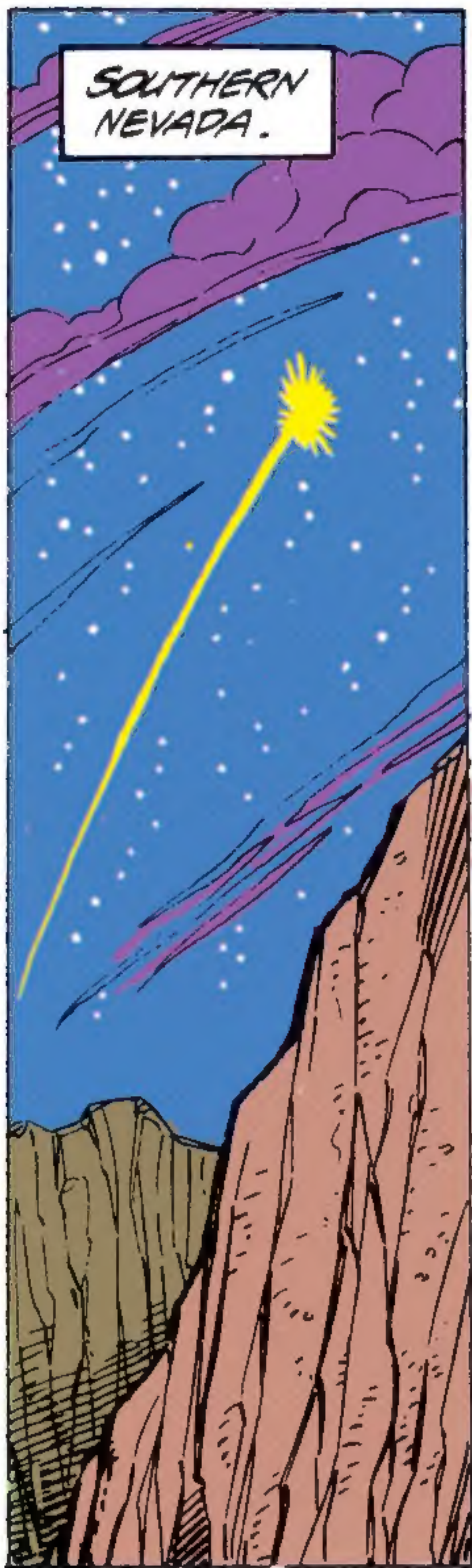
FITZ, LET'S MO--



KRYSTALIN.

--HHURRKK--





SOUTHERN NEVADA.



MROWW?

DON'T WORRY, KIMBA.

HE'LL COME.

HE OWES ME FROM OUR DAYS IN THE BADLANDS.

THOSE WERE WILD TIMES, KITTY.

I WAS BARELY ONE STEP AHEAD OF THE BOUNTY HUNTERS--

--AND DRAGGIN' A FREAKED-OUT KID AND A MANGY LITTLE FURBALL ALONG WITH ME DIDN'T MAKE LIFE ANY EASIER.

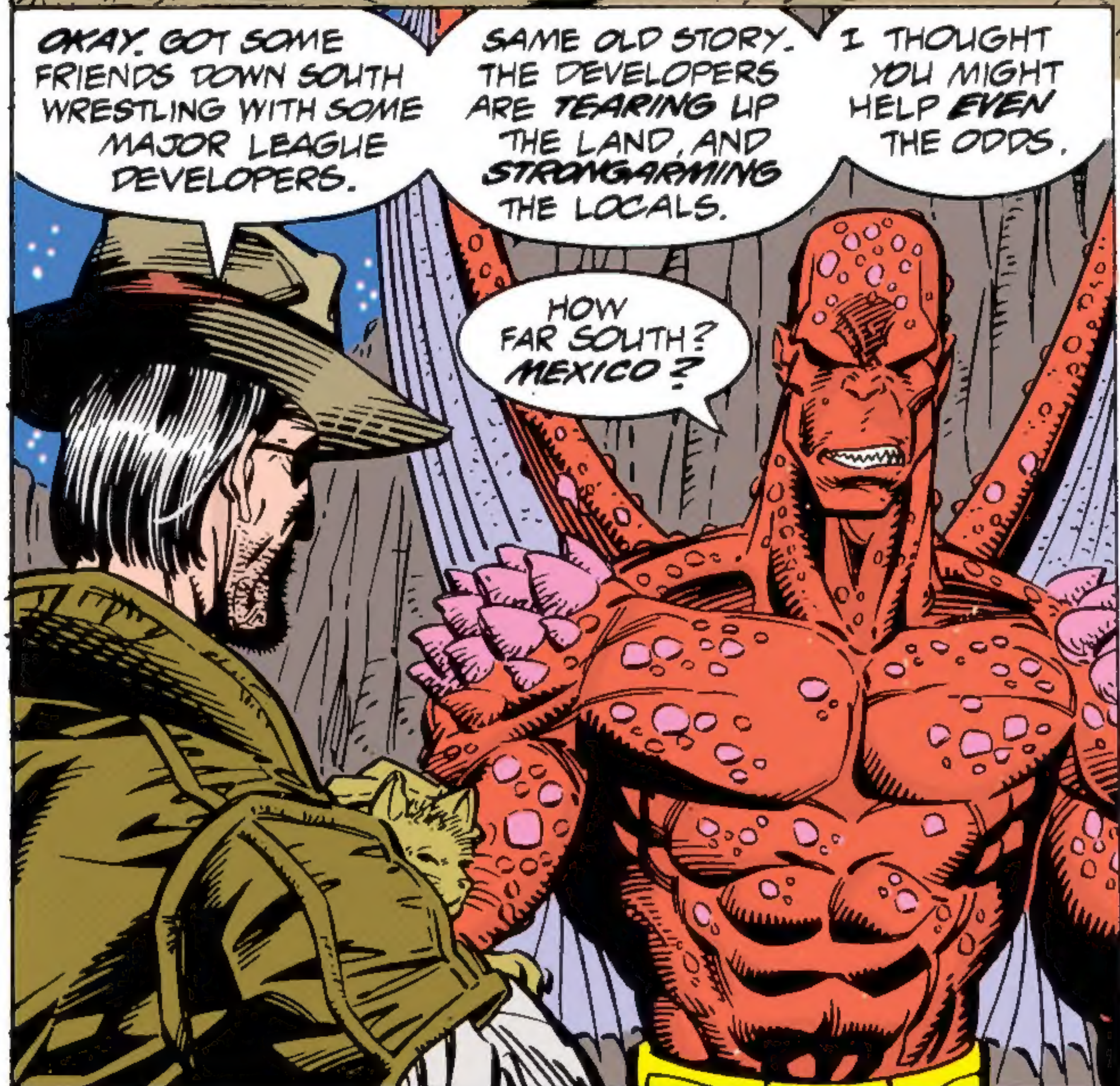
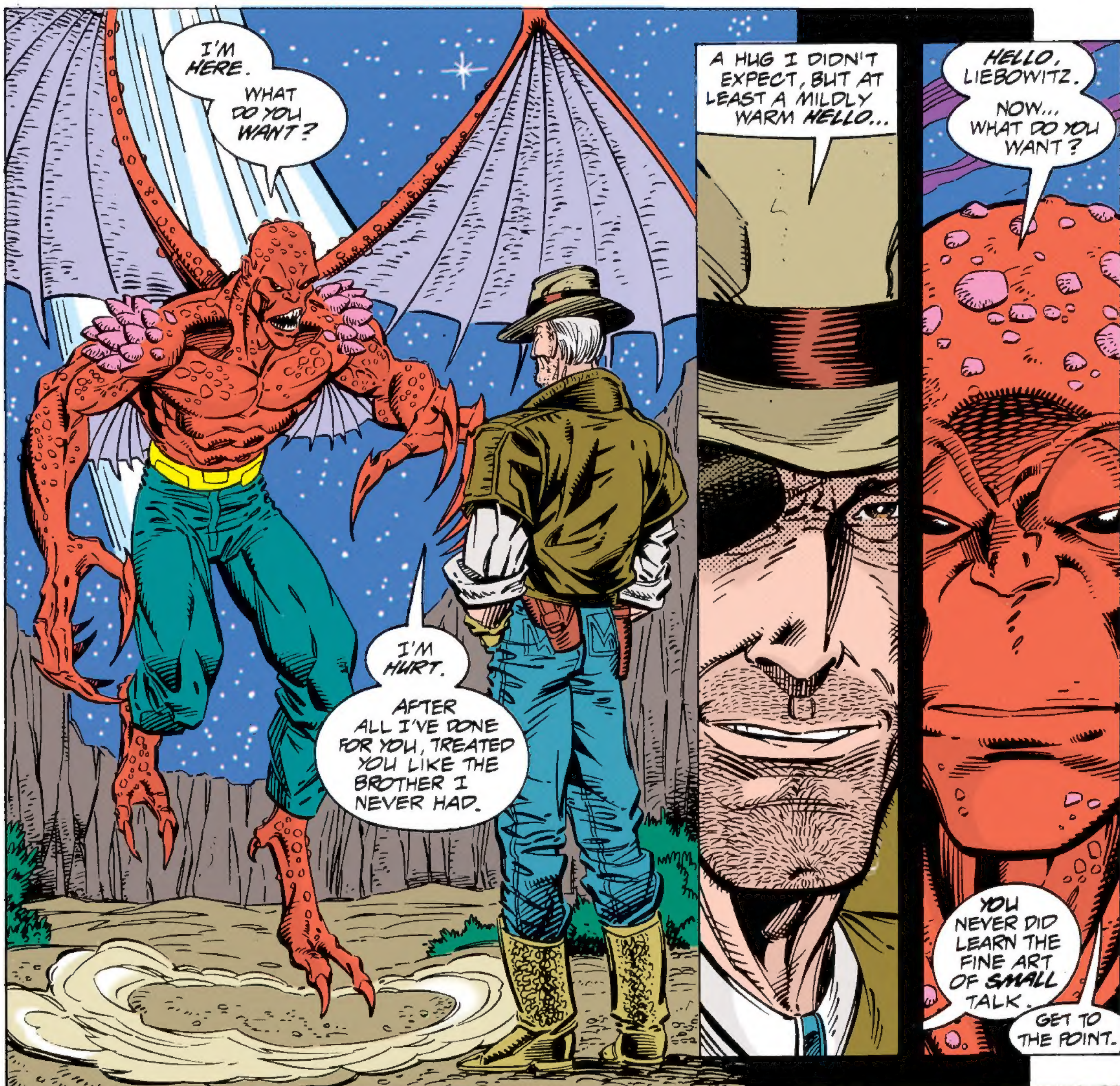


RRRRR.



Whoosh!

REROWW!



BACK AT ZHAO'S RANCH...

DID YOU
THINK LOCKING
US UP ON **POWER**
DAMPENING PLATFORMS
WOULD CONVINCE US
TO JOIN YOU--

--OR DO
YOU INTEND
TO **BLUDGEON**
US INTO
SUBMISSION?

HARDLY
WHAT I
EXPECTED
FROM A MAN
NOTED FOR
HIS **SPIRITUAL**
ENLIGHTEN-
MENT, ZHAO.

FORGET
ABOUT THAT **ZEN**
STUFF, XI'AN. THE
FLOATING NIGHT
LIGHT'S INTO
VOOOOO--

-- AND HE'S
GONNA TURN US
ALL INTO THE
WALKING DEAD
LIKE HE DID KRY'S
AND TEN
EAGLES.

CAN'T
STAND NOT
MOVING.

WHILE I
AM CERTAIN THE
FOUR OF YOU WOULD
EVENTUALLY SEE
THE WISDOM OF
MY CAUSE ...

... I HAVE
NEITHER THE TIME
NOR THE **PATIENCE**
TO WAIT FOR THAT
MOMENT.

IT WON'T
WORK, ZHAO.
WE WILL
RESIST
YOU.

THE BRAVADO
OF YOUTH COMES
FROM **IGNORANCE**.

YOU DO NOT
UNDERSTAND.
YOU DON'T HAVE
A CHOICE.

YOU ARE NOT
HERE BY **CHANCE**.
FATE BROUGHT
YOU TO ME.

UNTIL KRYSTALIN AND TEN EAGLES BROKE INTO MY COMPOUND*, I WAS UNAWARE A NEW GROUP OF MUTANTS NOW CLAIMED THE X-MEN MANTLE.

DESTINY HAD DELIVERED TO ME THE SOLUTION TO MY CURRENT PROBLEMS.

*LAST ISSUE.-- JOEY

AFTER CONVINCING THE CRYSTOMORPH AND THE KEEWAZI OF THE JUSTNESS OF MY CAUSE--

--THEY GLADLY CALLED YOU HERE.

THEY, TOO, RESISTED AT FIRST--

--AND SO I FOUND IT EXPEDIENT TO USE NEURAL IMPLANTS TO DIMINISH THEIR RESERVATIONS.

I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED STRONGLY IN THE BENEFITS OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY TO MY WORK.

ZHAO, WHEN WE FIRST MET, YOU SPOKE OF A HOLY WAR. SURELY YOU OF ALL PEOPLE KNOW IGNITING GENETIC DISCORD WILL ONLY DESTROY LIVES NEEDLESSLY. WASN'T THAT THE CORE OF WHAT YOU TAUGHT YOUR X-MEN?

MY X-MEN **BETRAYED** ME!

THE LONG CORPORATE AND GENETIC CONFLAGRATIONS HAD DRAINED TOO MUCH OF MY ENERGY.

NO LONGER DID MY MINDFIRE BURN AS POWERFULLY AS IT ONCE DID.

I SECLUDED MYSELF IN THE LABORATORY, ATTEMPTING TO SYNTHESIZE A PSYCHO-ACTIVE AMPLIFIER THAT WOULD RESTORE MY POWER.

DURING THAT TIME, OUTSIDE INFLUENCES CORRUPTED MY X-MEN, TURNING THEM AGAINST MY ILLUMINATED LEADERSHIP.

OH, THEY DID NOT CHALLENGE ME DIRECTLY. NO, THEY SOUGHT TO UNDERMINE ME WITH DECEPTION--FEIGNING CONCERN THAT MY PSYCHO-ACTIVITIES HAD AFFECTED MY REASON.

WITH GREAT REGRET, I WAS FORCED TO NEUTRALIZE MY TREACHEROUS BRETHREN.

YOU MEAN YOU KILLED THE LAST X-MEN?

YOU COLD HEARTED SON OF A--

THIS EXPLAINS WHY WE'VE FOUND NO RECORD OF ANY OF THOSE X-MEN PAST THE LOS ANGELES FIREFIGHTS...

DOESN'T TAKE A NEURO-PSYCH TO SEE THAT YOU ARE ONE PARANOID OLD MAN--

THOSE VITAMIN SUPPLEMENTS YOU COOKED UP HAVE DRIVEN YOU ABSOLUTELY OUT OF YOUR SKULL!

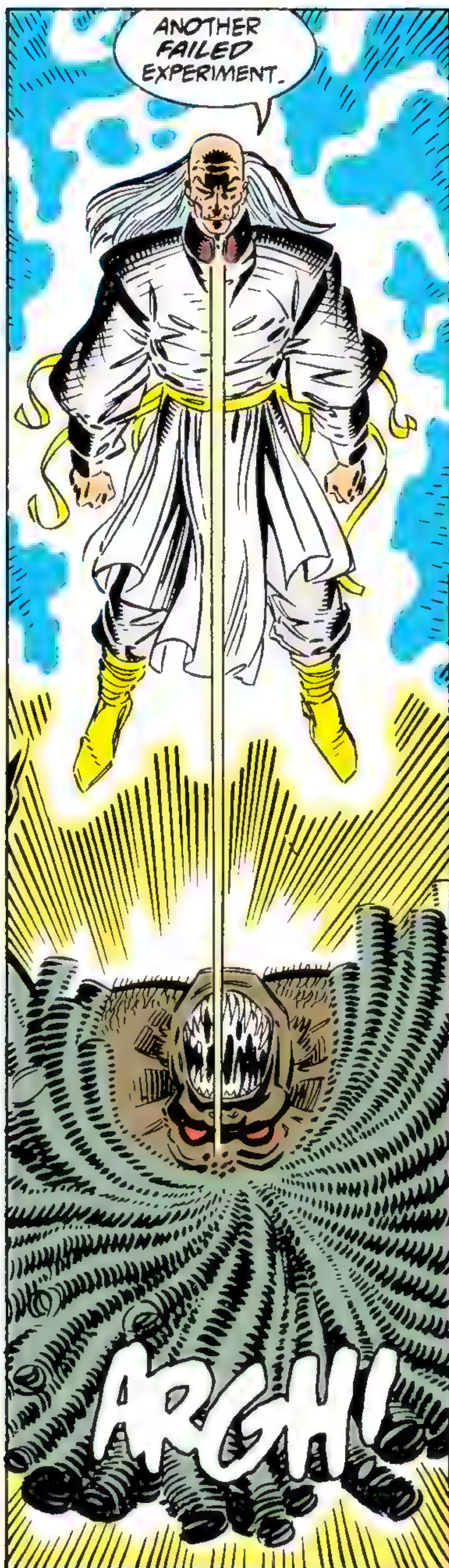
I AM NOT **CRAZY!**

CAREFUL, TIM, KEEP HIM DISTRACTED BUT DON'T PUSH HIM TOO HARD.

ALL I NEED IS ENOUGH TIME TO USE THE DISRUPTIVE PROPERTIES OF MY LEFT HAND TO BREAK OUT OF THIS MANACLE.

MASTER, HELP ME...





ANOTHER
FAILED
EXPERIMENT.

HE CAME TO
YOU FOR
HELP, AND YOU
KILLED
HIM.

I SENSE NO
NEUROLOGICAL
ACTIVITY FROM
THE THREE-
ARMED MUTANT.

ZHAO PSYCHICALLY
SHUT DOWN
THAT THIRD-
RATE BEAST'S
BRAIN.

YOUR MASTER
JUST ICED ONE
OF YOURS--

WHY ARE YOU
STANDING
THERE? DO
SOMETHING!

THAT'S THE
MOST VICIOUS
THING I'VE
EVER SEEN...

THEY COULD NOT STAND
AGAINST ME, TIMOTHY
FITZGERALD. I AM MORE
THAN THEIR LEADER, I
AM THEIR CREATOR.

AFTER
MY FIRST X-MEN
TURNED AGAINST ME,
I REALIZED I
NEEDED TO INSURE
MY MUTANTS'
LOYALTY.

I FOUND FIVE
CHILDREN WHOSE
MUTANT ABILITIES
WERE ROUGHLY
ANALOGOUS TO
XAVIER'S
ORIGINALS.

THROUGH
YEARS OF HORMONE
ACCELERATION AND
NEUROTECHNOLOGICAL
AUGMENTATION, I
MADE THEM INTO THE
FIRST OF MY CHOSEN.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE
PROCESS ALSO MAKES
THEM GENETICALLY UNSTABLE.

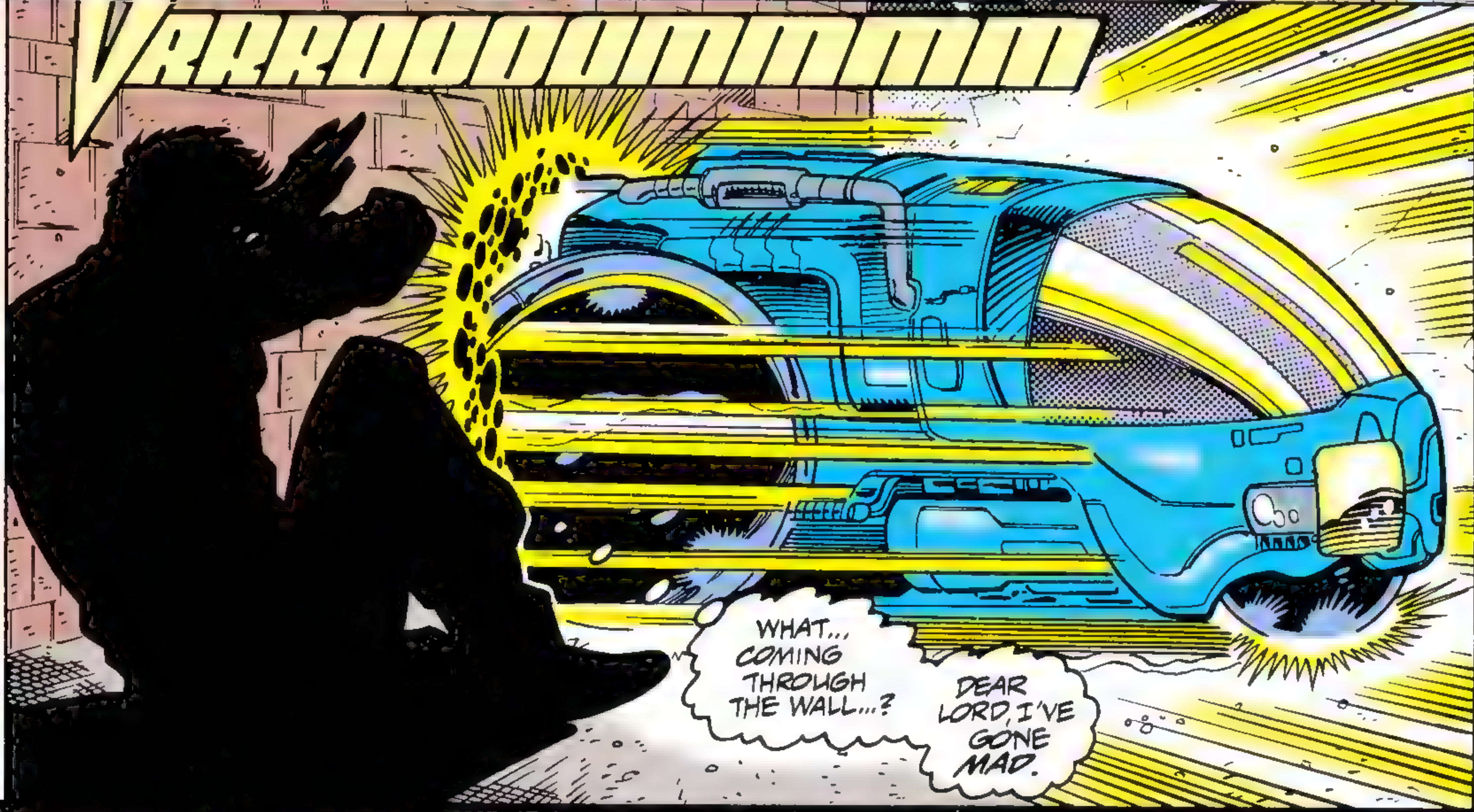
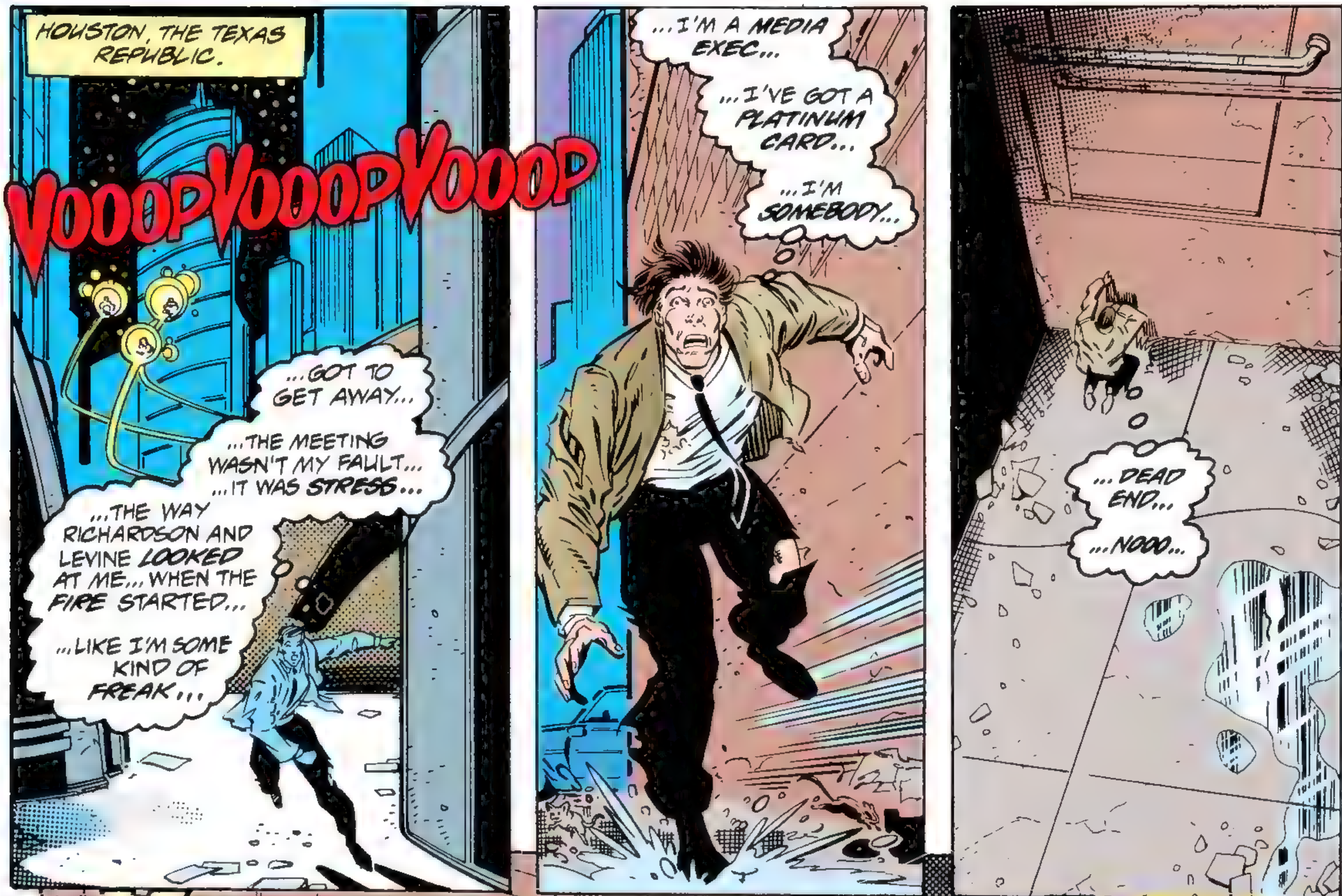
YOU MEAN WHAT
HAPPENED TO
MONSTER'S
GONNA HAPPEN
TO ALL OF US?

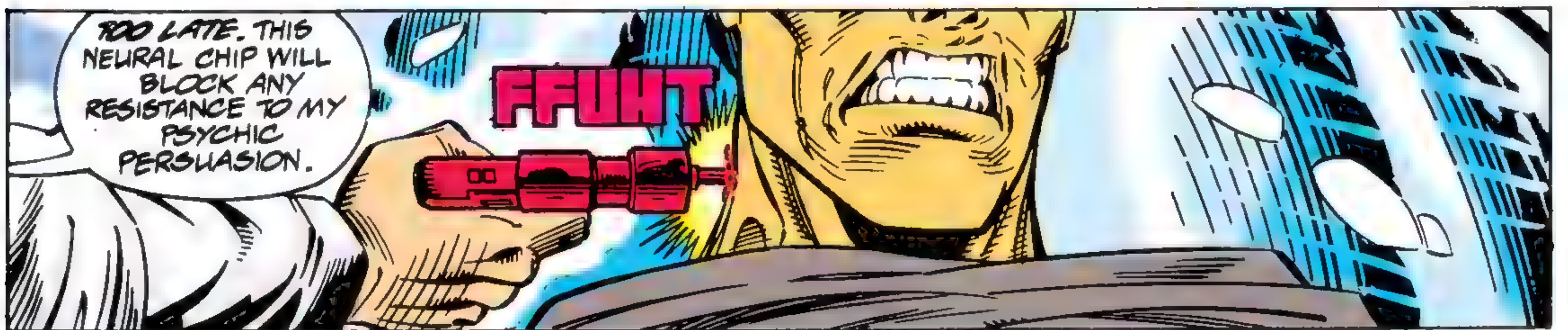
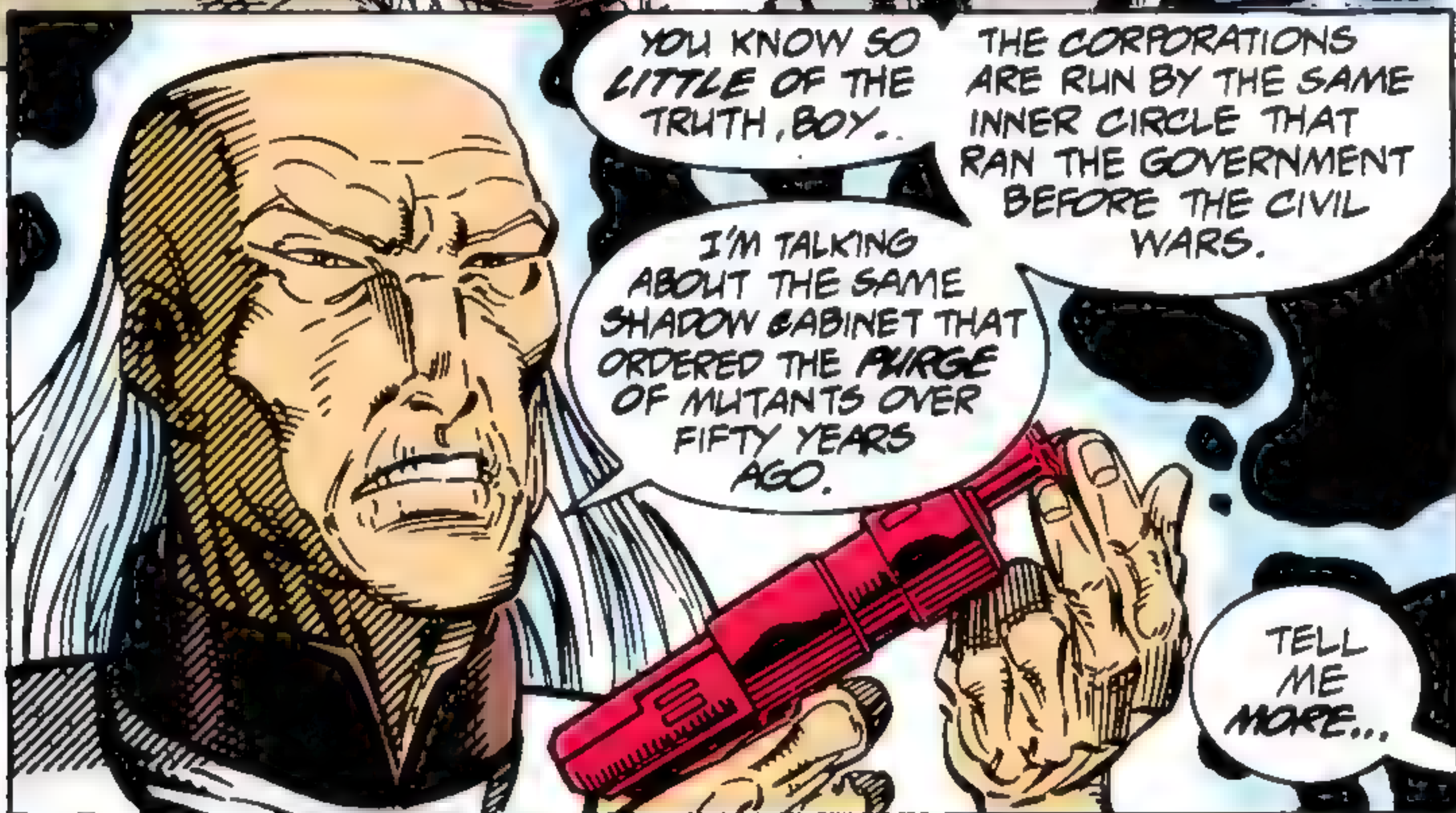
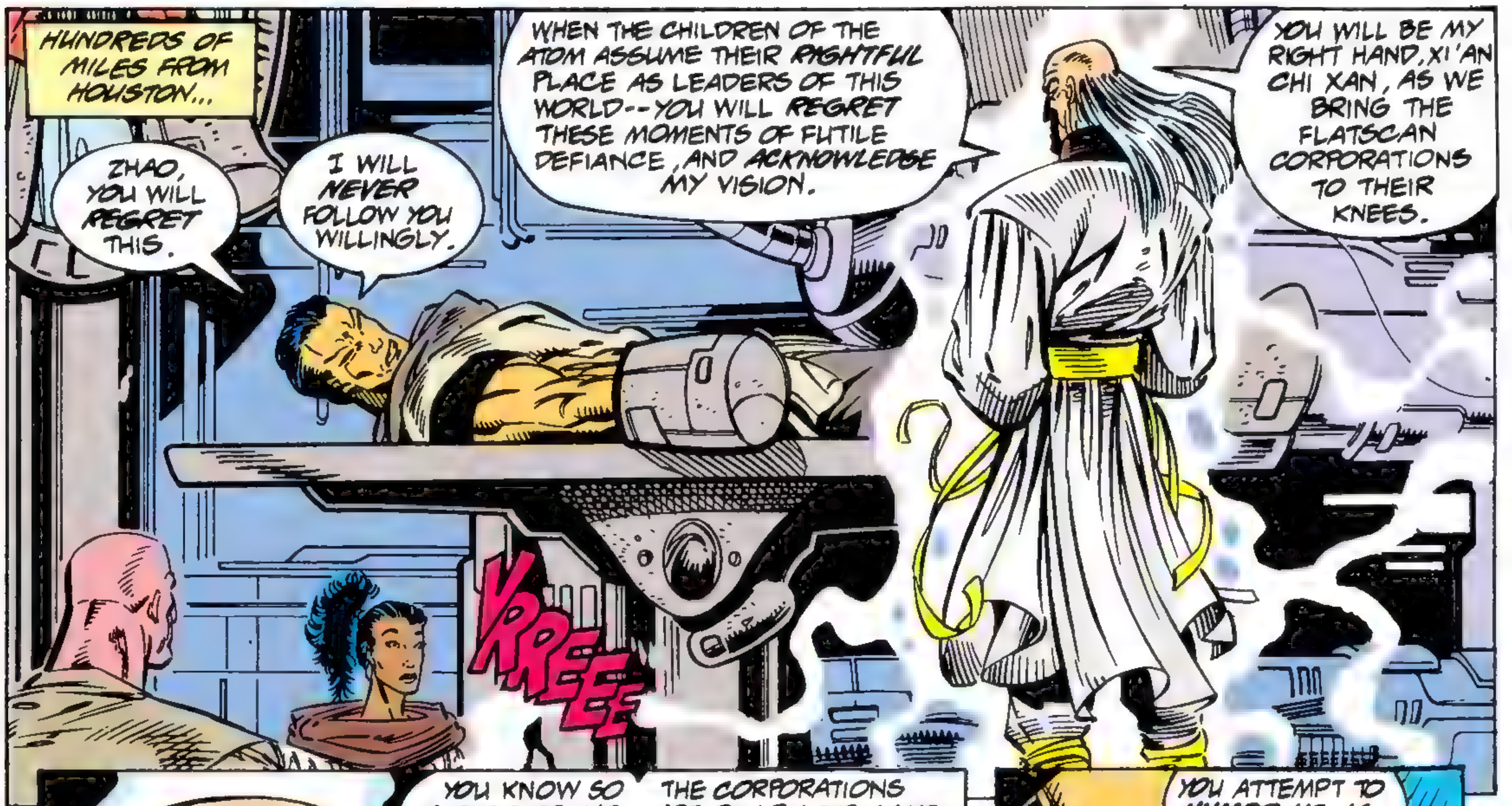
IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, JACK.
DUPLICATING THE ORIGINAL
X-MEN WAS A FOOLISH
CONCEIT.

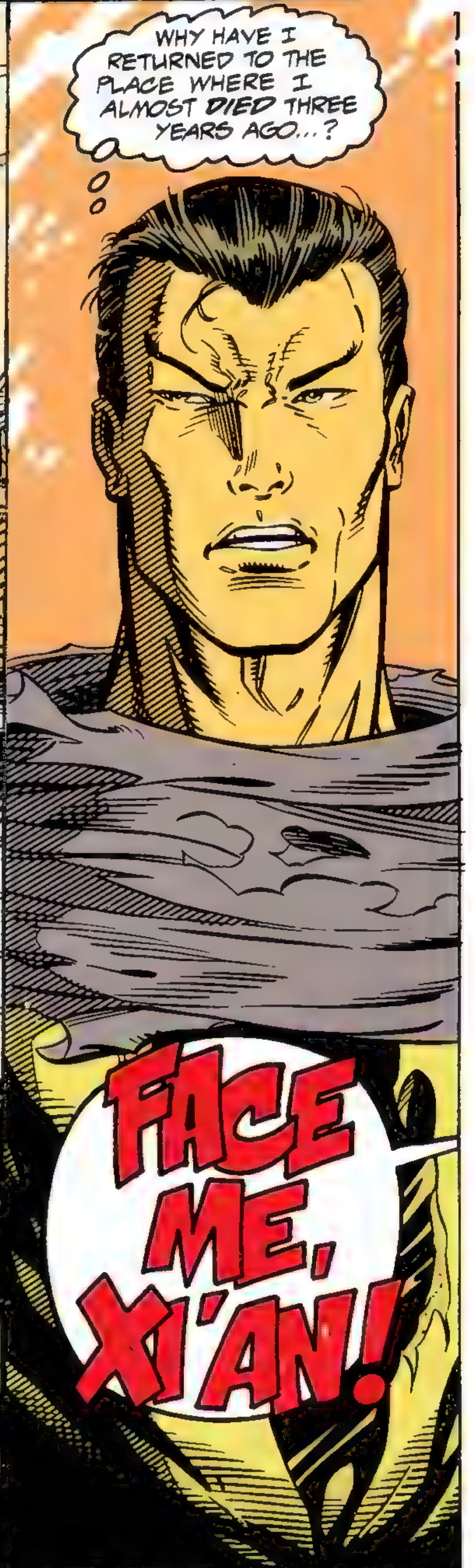
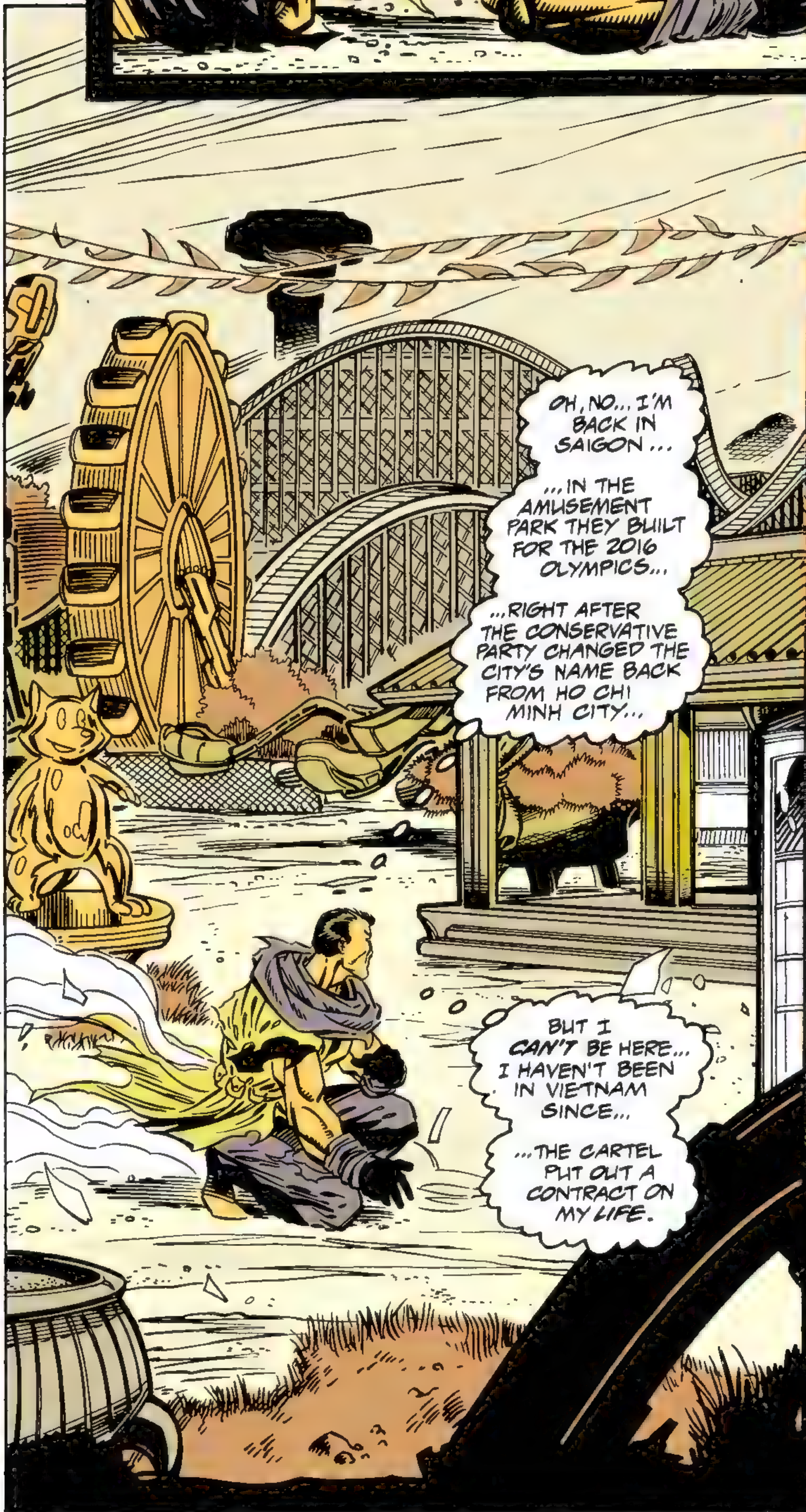
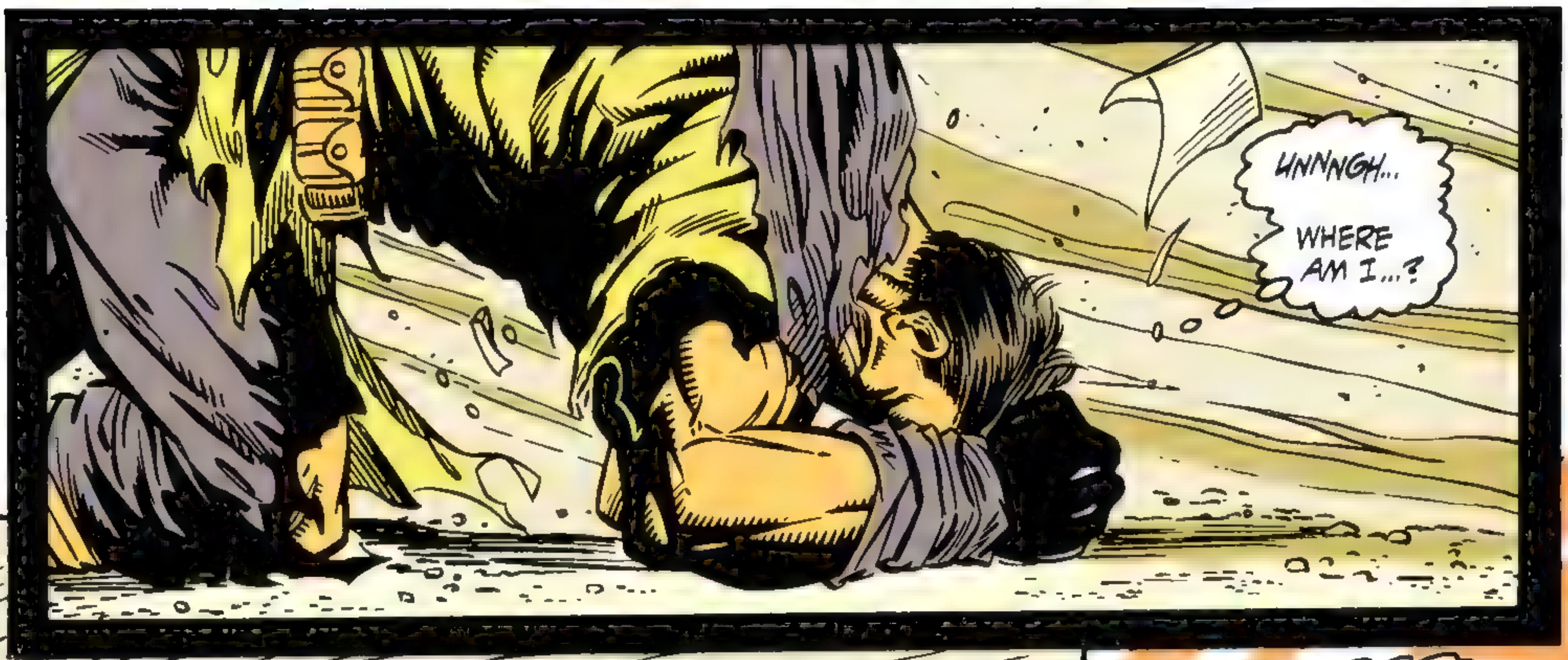
YOU'LL
NOT LAST
THROUGH THE
BATTLES
AHEAD.

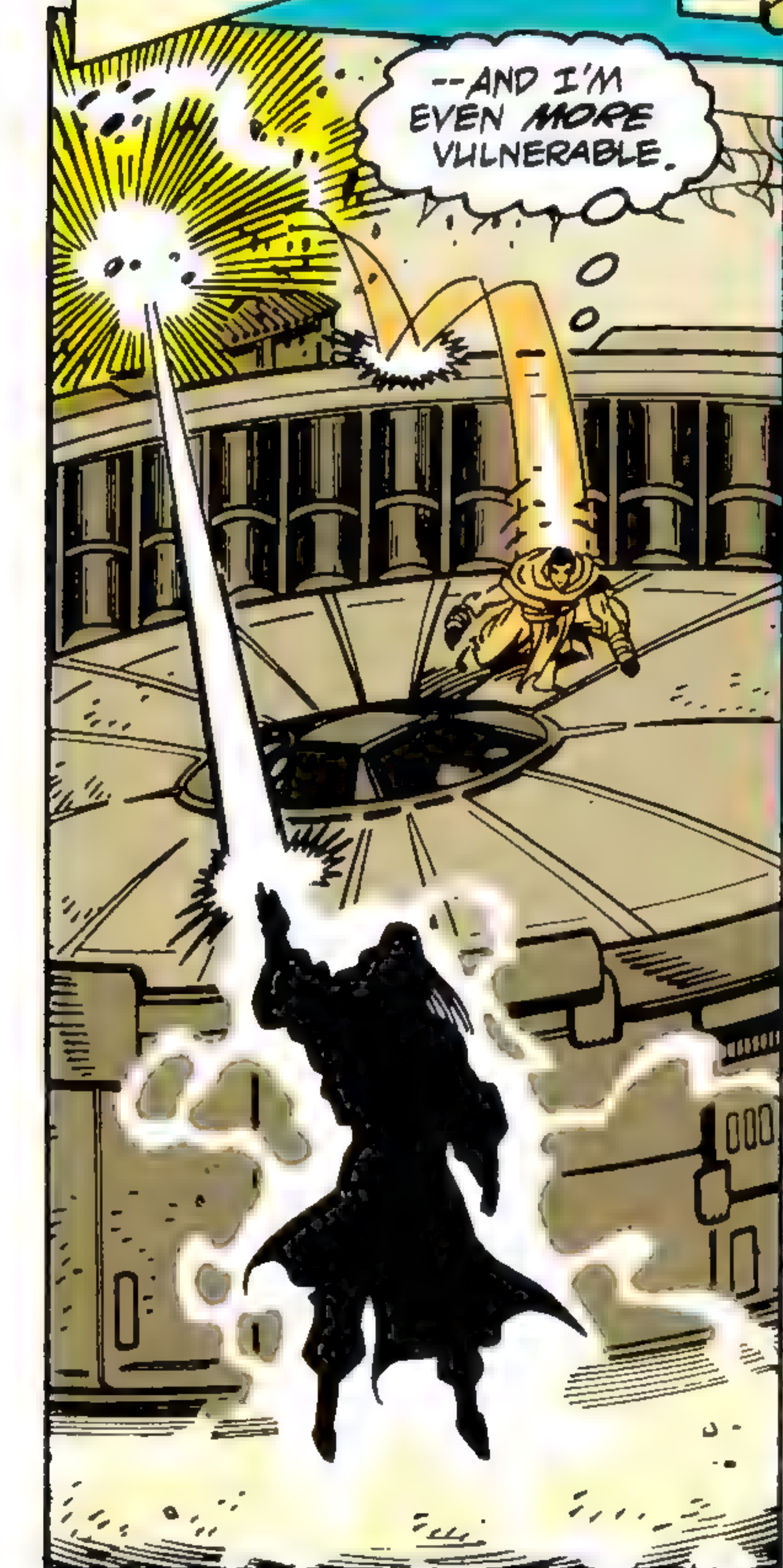
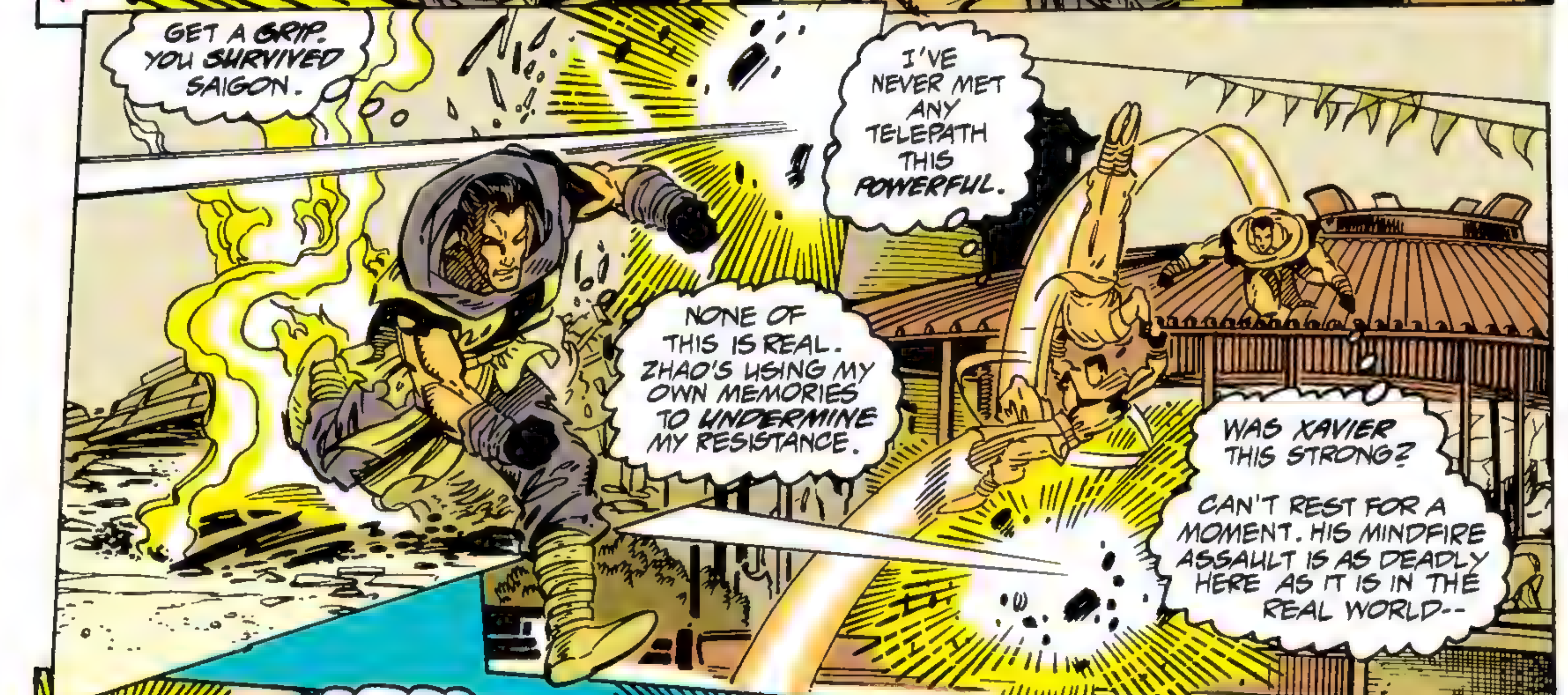
THAT IS
WHY I
LURED XI'AN'S
X-MEN
HERE.

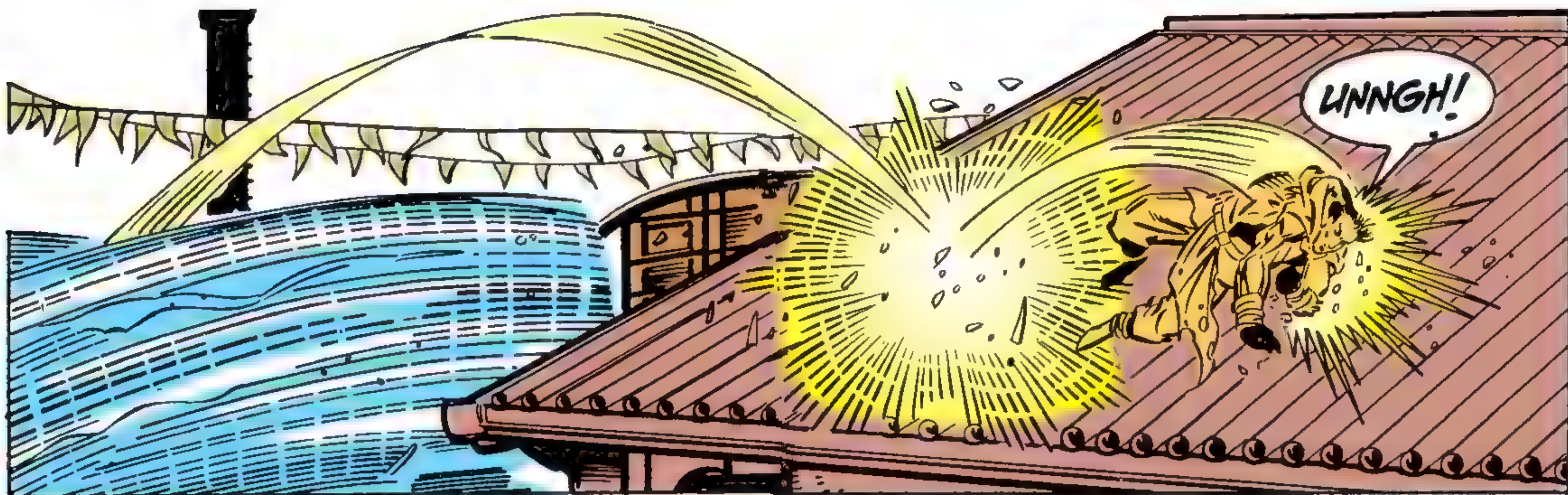
I NEED
FULL-
BLOODED
MUTANTS
TO BE MY
ELITE.











YOU'RE
A SORRY
SIGHT.

WHO WOULD'VE
THOUGHT THE DESERT
GHOST WOULD BE
TAKEN OUT BY A
GERIATRIC
HOPHEAD?

I CAN
HELP.

you!

NEVER!



YOU CAN'T RUN
FROM THE TRUTH.
YOU'RE LOSING
BADLY.

PRETTY SOON,
YOU'RE GOING TO
BE AS VACANT AS
KRY'S AND TEN
EAGLES, KISSING
UP TO THAT CRAZY
OLD MAN.

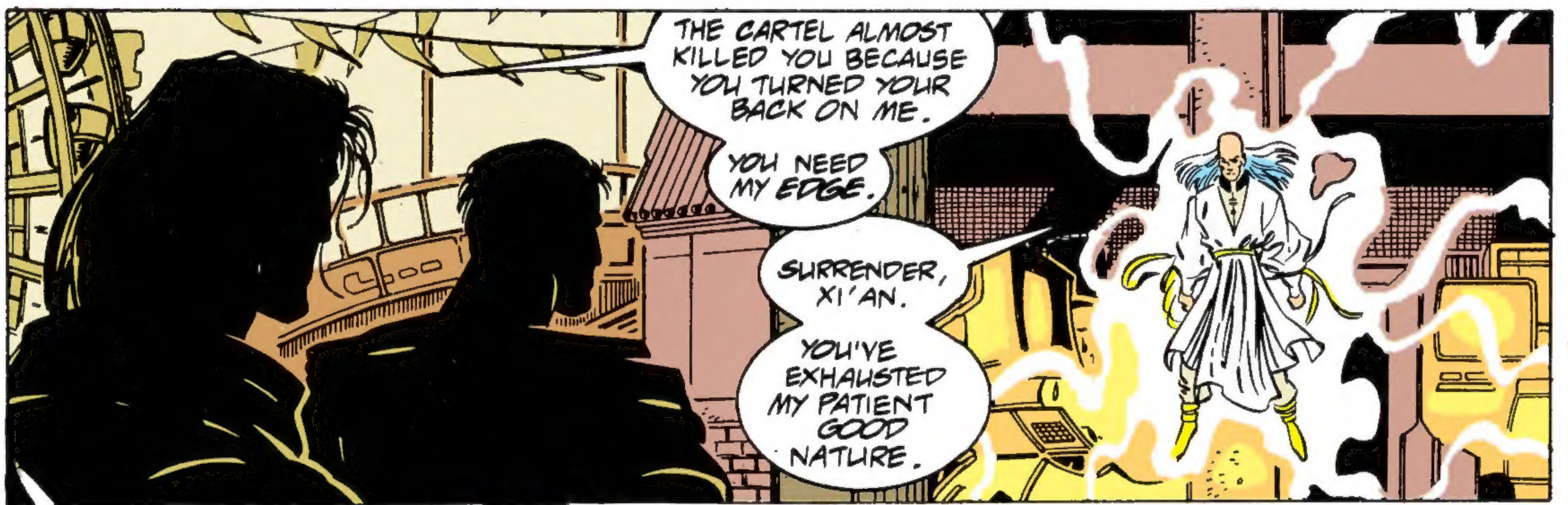
I DON'T
NEED YOU!



ADMIT IT. I'M THE
WILDFIRE THAT MADE
YOU **DANGEROUS--**
UNPREDICTABLE--

--I MADE YOU
UNSTOPPABLE.

YOU'RE
THE PART OF ME
THAT DIDN'T CARE
ABOUT ANYONE
BUT HIMSELF.





YOU WIN...

DON'T ACT SO DEFEATED. ZHAO DIDN'T CHOOSE THE AMUSEMENT PARK FOR HIS BATTLEFIELD--

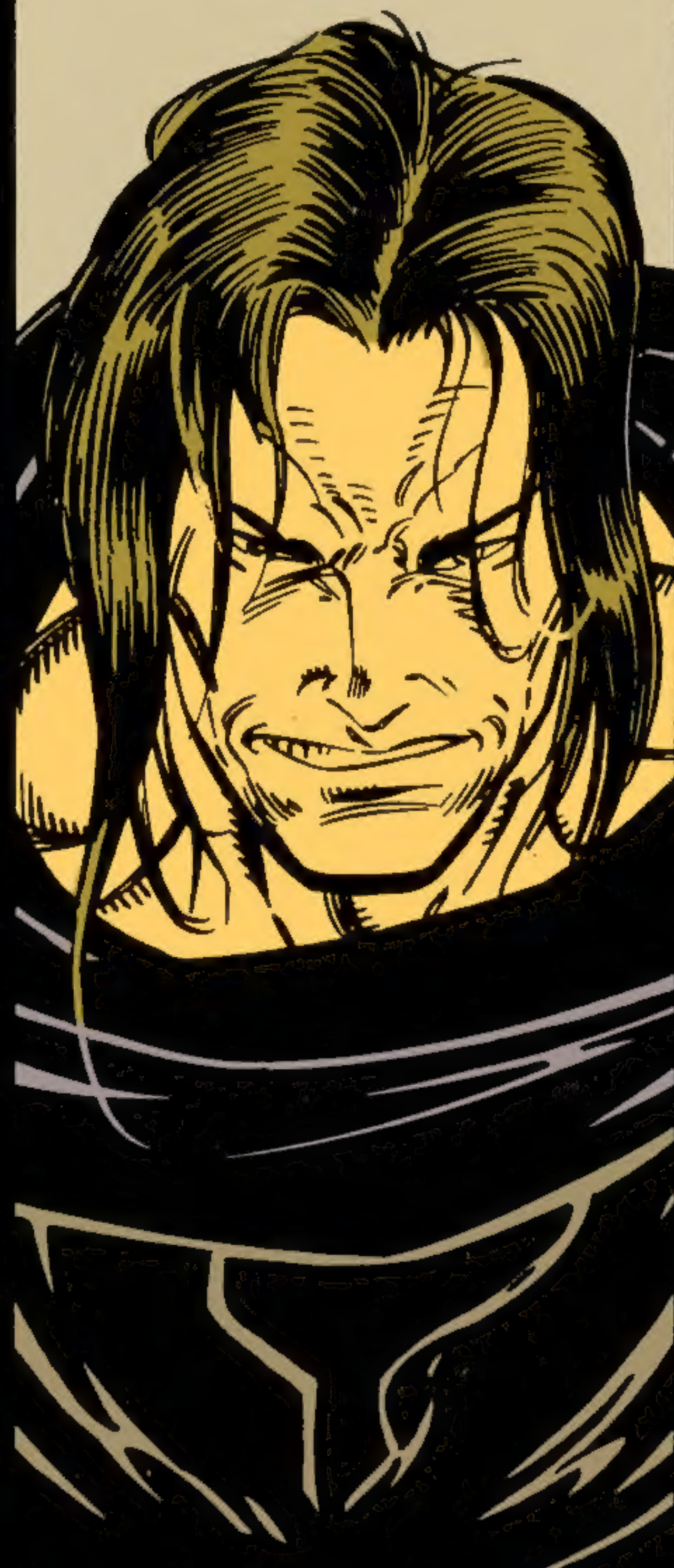


YOU DID BECAUSE YOU KNEW I'D BE HERE--

--BECAUSE YOU KNEW THAT SOONER OR LATER YOU'D HAVE TO LET ME BACK IN.



SEEMS LIKE OLD TIMES.



SORRY, OLD MAN. LOOKS LIKE THE PARK IS CLOSED.

THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE. YOU CANNOT BE STANDING.

MAYBE YOU'RE JUST SENILE--

WHY AREN'T YOU FALLING?

--OR MAYBE YOU JUST PICKED THE WRONG MIND TO MUCK WITH.



